THE ARTIST AND POLITICS, BY ARTHUR KOESTLER

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The Saturday Review of Literature

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Reviewed by Phil Stong

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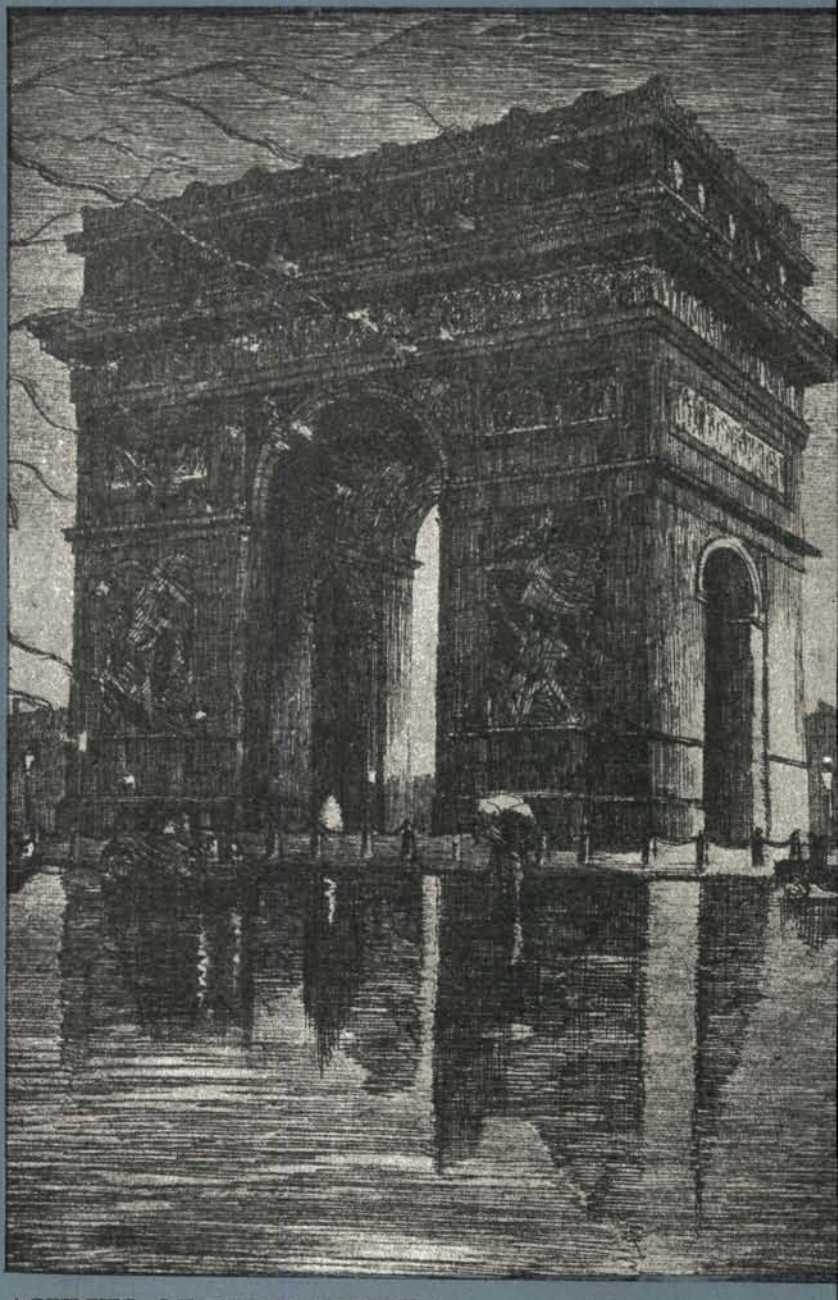

ASPECTS OF PARIS STREETS as pictured by Harold C. Geyer illustrate the fact that "French civilization . . . could not die in a month." *(See page 8)*

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by Lewis Browne

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Artist and Politics

ARTHUR KOESTLER

ONE of the great Russians, I think it was Turgeniev, could only write with his feet in a bucket of hot water under his desk, facing the open window of his room. I believe that this position is typical for the novelist. The hot water bucket stands for inspiration, the subconscious, the creative source, or whatever we like to call it. The open window stands for the world outside, the raw material for the artist's creation.

Let us for once ignore the hot water bucket and assume that our novelist is a genuine artist, endowed with creative force; and let us instead concentrate on the open window and its influence on the man behind his desk.

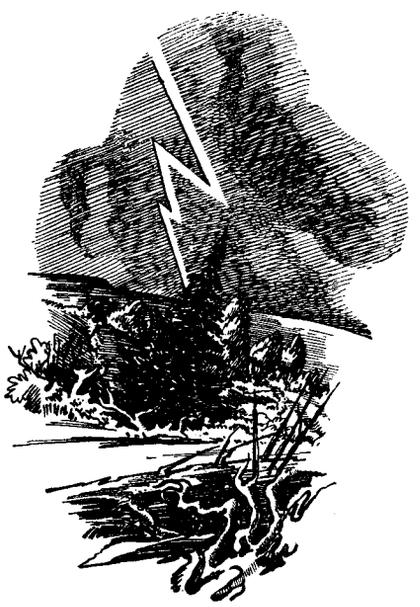
The first and strongest temptation which the world outside the window exerts on the writer is to draw the curtains and close the shutters. Now this apparently so simple reaction has various interesting aspects of which I would like to mention a few.

Perhaps the most dangerous one is that the gesture seems so natural. The writer needs concentration; his nerves are easily upset. He must make an immense and ever renewed effort to bear the open window, to let those piercing screams into the room, the laughter, the groaning, and those ephemeral battlecries.

Another aspect of the temptation to close the window is that it does not at all resemble the traditional form of temptation, but rather the opposite. The tempter does not appeal to base mortal desires but to the loftiest regions of the spirit. His lures are: Peace, Beauty, perhaps even communion with God. The fiend does not ask you for your soul, he wants to make you a gift of it. He whispers: "Shut the window. The world is a hopeless case. Action is evil. Responsibility is evil. Draw the curtains, forget those savage battlecries, fill your ears with stillness and bathe your smarting eyes in the dim light of eternity."

Behind the closed shutters strange and sometimes beautiful constructions come to life, the growths of the hothouse, plots and characters hatched in the hothouse. The ivory tower was only one passing form of closed-shutter-interior. There are others; for the decoration of the room with the drawn curtains is, strangely enough, subject to the fashion of the time, although fashion and time itself are supposed to be locked out. The ivory tower was an esthete's creation; others are modelled on ethic principles. Their inhabitants don't fiddle while Rome burns, they pray. The room with the drawn curtains may be changed into the nave of a cathedral where the bearded Russian novelist sings hymns of atonement for his revolutionary past; or a sort of introspective deep-sea-aquarium populated by monsters in phosphorescent light; or the padded cell of Maupassant and Gerard de Nerval. The latest transformation seems to be an exotic hermitage fit for yogi exercises. It almost looks as if the Pink Decade were to be followed by a Yogi Decade. It is in the air; I feel it; being myself a Continental product of the Pink Decade I feel now and again the temptation of going yogi like recurrent attacks of malaria.

In temptation No. 2 the action of the open window on the novelist is experienced not in the form of pressure but as suction. The man behind his desk is tempted not to close the shutters but to lean right out of the window. He is so fascinated by the events in the street that he begins to gesticulate, shout, and declaim. Before, we had the case of an unimpaired creative force, but no vision of reality; here we have the case of a boiling hot vision undigested by the creative process. In leaning too far out of the window our author has taken his feet out of the hot water bucket; in technical terms he has ceased to be a novelist and became a reporter. This seems to be the reason of the failure of many prose writers of the Pink Decade, especially in Germany where the movement originated. It was characterized by the slogans "Gebrauchsliteratur," "Zeitroman." It was the period in which Johannes R. Becher published a volume of poems with the title: An die Wand zu kleben—To be Pasted on the Wall. It was a period in which novels read like dispatches by war correspondents from the fronts of the class struggle. The characters seemed to be flat, two-dimensional beings, fighting their shadow battles against a lurid background. People in the pink novel had a class-dimension (length) plus, say, a sex-dimension (width); the third, irrational dimension (depth) was missing or atrophied.



In the post-pink or yogi decade the irrational dimension takes its revenge by outgrowing all others. The few authors who have survived the pink era are those who, even in the thick of the battle, never forgot the irrational dimension—*e.g.,* Malraux. But they are exceptions.

Apparently it is very difficult to keep the window open and your feet in the hot water bucket at the same time. Therefore most novelists, past and present, adopt a compromise, and this compromise is the essence of temptation No. 3.

In this case the window is neither open nor closed but left ajar, or the curtains are drawn in such a way as to expose only a limited section of the world outside and mercifully hide the more disturbing, painful, and menacing sights from the author's eye. He may even push a telescope through a hole in the curtain and thus obtain an image with admirably sharp contours of a small and perhaps not very important fraction of the world. Works of incontestable merit can thus be produced in spite of the fact that they are made of fragments only of the phenomena outside—there is love without

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sex, work without sweat, class distinction without envy, melancholia without constipation. The telescope may also be focussed in another direction, or the left window opened instead of the right—then we get sex without love and a sharp telescopic image of constipation, hatred, and sweat. And again works of merit have been produced with this fragmentary optic. Why then call this so successful method a "succumbing to temptation" and why insist on the fully open window? Because the hole-in-the-curtain method may produce occasional masterpieces of technical virtuosity as in the Victorian novel (Dickens) or in the naturalistic novel (Zola), but inevitably leads to a dead end in the development of the novel as an art. Our admiration for Dickens or Zola always has a slight taint of benevolent indulgence.

Indeed, the term "temptation" presupposes the existence of a road leading to a certain end, a road to perfection from which the tempter tries to lure us to side-tracks. To yield does not necessarily involve artistic failure: the dead end may lie on romantic peaks and Wuthering Heights or in the swampy valleys of La Bas. But I do believe that the novel is a form of art for which a model of perfection although it can never practically be achieved, can yet be visualized. And I do believe that there is a main road leading from "Ulenspiegel" and "Don Quixote" to "War and Peace," "The Magic Mountain," and "Fontamara." And I also believe that "Tristram Shandy," and "Wuthering Heights," "Swann's Way," and "The Waves," are masterpieces at dead ends.

To justify this apparently arbitrary distinction, let us return to our open window and watch our fallen author at work. The curtains of his window are closed, but he has made a tiny circular hole in the fabric, with a telescope pushed through, focussed on a house and a garden, and a young lady with a bunch of roses in her hands, waiting for her betrothed. She is not necessarily the wishdream-young-lady of suburban circulating libraries—she may be a very sophisticated young lady with, in her free left hand, a volume of Proust. "Isn't she lovely?", asks our author—who may be a very good author recommended by the Book Society—"isn't she *alive?* Her name is Sylvia." And indeed we must admit that house, garden, lady, and roses are perfectly lifelike in spite of the fact that they were produced by the hole-in-the-curtain method. We watch them with admiration until about page twenty-five, and then we horrify the author with the question "Excuse us, but haven't you forgotten the factory chimney in the background, the splitting of the atom, Voronoff's apes, and the concentration camps?" "Are you crazy"?, retorts our author, "do you expect me to drag an atom-splitter into my picture, or a German refugee with scars on his back?" The answer, of course, is no.

We do not want him to drag anything into the picture, not even a chimney as background; that would not help. But there is an alternative in our minds which does require an answer if Sylvia is to be not a puppet but a real being, living in this century, now and here. The alternative is this: either she knows about the concentration camps and still goes on standing there with roses in her hand, then this adds an important feature to her character—not necessarily a derogative feature, but an important one. Or she has never heard or read about them—then this again gives us a cue. And these cues are essential because they show us her relations, or absence of relations, to the essential facts of her time. But these essentials being shielded from the author by the curtain with the one tiny hole—how can he show her to us in true proportion to them? We do not miss the factory-chimney in the picture—we miss it in the author's mind.

The absence of background (not in the picture but in the author's mind) makes the house, the garden, and Sylvia with her roses, appear as a half-truth, a lie. It is the author's ignorance of what is going on behind the veiled parts of the window which deprives the picture of its width and depth, of perspective and proportion, and which makes me feel that, the longer we look at the young lady in her garden, the more she resembles a wax figure at Madame Tussaud's.

THE perfect novel, then, indeed presupposes a totally open window, and that the author should have an all-embracing knowledge of the essential currents and facts (including statistics), of the ideas and theories (including natural science) of his time. This knowledge is not for actual use—that would produce an encyclopedia, not a novel. It has to act as a catalytic agent, as the saliva in the process of creative assimilation. Without it, the characters will be distorted and the story arbitrary like a Victorian plot. The act of creation presupposes omniscience.

But is not all this rather abstract? In hundreds of novels, and some quite good novels among them, the young lady still stands triumphantly in her garden and still clasps those roses in her outstretched hand. Our objection to her was that author did not, or did not want to see her in the perspective

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Edmonds . . .

YOUNG AMES. A Novel. By Walter D. Edmonds. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1942. 350 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ALLAN NEVINS

IN his previous novels Mr. Edmonds has combined rather careful character study with a well-authenticated and convincing historical background. In this loose series of sketches he permits himself a bit of relaxation. Their object, as those who have read some of them in the *Saturday Evening Post* know, is light entertainment. His hero John Ames—Yankee stock from Rensselaer County—who becomes junior clerk in the mercantile house of Chevalier, Deming & Post on South Street in 1833, is studied from the Horatio Alger tradition rather than from life. Whether showing his pluck in fighting the plug-uglies at a fire, or his shrewdness in diddling those competitors who wished to diddle his firm, or his enterprise in dashing down the Mississippi to beat the Federal mails, or his gallantry in wooing and winning the demure daughter of his boss, "Young Ames" is pure storybook, not reality. But he and his adventures are always entertaining on their somewhat adolescent level. Mr. Edmonds has packed into his book all the varied excitements of life in the bustling, fast-growing New York of Jacksonian times: fisticuffs, riots, keen commercial competition, gambling, politics, and much else appertaining to what Mr. Chevalier called "these unscrupulous times."

Without showing half as much finish or affectionate insight as in Mr. Edmonds's Erie Canal and Mohawk Valley books, the local scene is graphically sketched. The great conflagration of 1835, the bloody rows of Bowery Boys and Dead Rabbits, the attacks on Tappan, Cox, and other abolitionists, the attempts of Ned Forrest's admirers to drive English actors from the stage, the feuds of the volunteer firemen, the demonstrations of hatred and hero-worship inspired by Andrew Jackson, are all accurately if hastily rendered. It is evident that Mr. Edmonds is leaning heavily on Walter Barrett, Philip Hone, Robert G. Albion, and the other sources mentioned in his preface; not, as in his upper New York books, upon a firsthand knowledge of the district and its traditions. But he has done particularly well in getting on paper the sharp business spirit of the time, tempered in firms like Chevalier, Deming by a well-fixed if not highly elevated code of morals. Altogether, this is an amusing book for an idle half-hour, and a still better book for youth of high-school age.

Walter D. Edmonds

Carousso . . .

OPEN THEN THE DOOR. By Dorothee Carousso. New York: William Morrow. 1942. 313 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PHIL STONG

THE son of a high class French-Catholic-American family marries the great granddaughter of some American pioneers; the two families then start in to apply family ties to the marriage, right around the neck. The depression comes along to help out the families but the quality of the two principal characters is such that they manage to make their marriage work in spite of everything. The book ends on the happy note of the heroine's belated discovery that her mother is an objectionable old woman.

This structure is, of course, ridiculously simple but the book does not rest on structure or need to; it rests on two truly engaging and noble people, and a supporting cast of completely plausible relatives, many of whom badly need shooting—but they are real enough to make the reader feel this strongly. The central idea derives from Samuel Butler but it is treated with pity and sympathy rather than cynicism; the children understand thoroughly the unavoidable jealousies that make their parents and in-laws, behave like Yahoos whenever they are concerned.

The writing is not quite even; occasionally it tends to slide over toward the good old Deeping-Cronin-Douglas soap barrel, but this is infrequent and the greater part of the book is very perceptive and very moving.

The title is a small literary mystery, for no character in the book resembles any Tentmaker, living or dead.

Hurst . . .

LONELY PARADE. By Fannie Hurst. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1942. 343 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by N. L. ROTHMAN

THOSE readers who have come to expect from Fannie Hurst a well-defined and comfortably familiar type of story will need to readjust themselves very sharply. For Miss Hurst reveals, in "Lonely Parade," a capacity for social irony that is as solid as it is unexpected, and a capacity also for treating with all of her accustomed thoroughness a group of characters who are essentially barren and unhappy, surely strange faces in her gallery. She is writing of a trio of women who must have seemed a good deal stranger at the turn of the century, when their story begins, than they do today: bachelor career girls. The objectivity with which Miss Hurst traces the history of this trinity is not to be found, we think, anywhere in her well-known novels. It is not a cold or disinterested objectivity; not that, for she endows them in fact with every possible fact of personality, with talents, successes, until they make their establishment (a fantastic three-storied house on the East Fifties) a center of everything that is unique and fashionable in New York.

Miss Hurst gives them everything, but she manages this time to stay outside them, to make no special plea but rather to observe. And all through their crowded history there runs the realization of defeat, fragmentation where there should be integration. Oh, Miss Hurst will have her feminist friends to deal with when they read "Lonely Parade." They are lonely, the gifted three. They are not wives, they belong to no men, and this is the cry that runs along the channels of their subconscious and crops forth in their private speech. The theme is simple; we cannot tell whether there is a trend here or not. Miss Hurst does not, of course, depend upon it for any preachment. Her book is rich in what has been called the furnishings of the novel. There has been, for example, no such verbal rioting over furniture and drapes and objets d'art since Mr. Hergesheimer let himself go. The physical dressing of the book is immense, and unquestionably right; against it the careers of the three leap up like sudden, bizarre plants, somehow rootless. In Miss Hurst's career "Lonely Parade" may be a lone experiment, or it may signalize a new tack altogether. Mr. Marquand has already shown how notable such a tack may be. Are we to see it done again?

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The Life of a School

THE LITTLE RED SCHOOL HOUSE. By Agnes de Lima. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1942. 241 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by LUCY SPRAGUE SMITH

THIS book might be called an autobiography of a school,—the Little Red School House. It is written by Agnes de Lima. Yet in a very real sense it is written by the school. "We" talk throughout the pages, and "we" means Elizabeth Irwin, the vigorous pioneer in education, the teachers, the parents, the children. Each has solo parts where you hear the individual voices. But throughout you hear the voice of the composite school. That Miss de Lima has been able to transmit this composite voice so clearly is no small achievement. No one with less human sensibility, with less educational background, with less social penetration, could have achieved this Trilby-like success.

And what is the Little Red School House that we should wish to hear its biography? Let it be said in the beginning—I quote Miss Irwin—that in spite of its name, the school is "neither very little nor very red." It is an experimental progressive school some twenty years old. There are many progressive schools, though not nearly enough of them! The statement of general educational aims is not strikingly different from that of some other schools. Yet this school, as far as I know, is distinct from all others. "Our primary aim," says the school, "has been to demonstrate how the type of education which we believe in can be applied to public schools."

In practical terms, this means that the Little Red School House has large classes, from thirty to thirty-five children. It accepts children in the order of their application as do Public Schools. The only children with priority claims are brothers and sisters of children already in school, and Negroes.

What does go on there? When a parent new to the school was asked what he thought was the best thing about the school, he answered without hesitation, "It gives the kids a good life." The book shows this good life in every classroom; on the public playgrounds that the children use; in their plays and dance dramas; in the extraordinarily powerful frescoes that groups of children paint together; in the deeply expressive stories and "poems" that individual children write; and perhaps above all, in the vivid, earnest discussions where children and teachers make a real group. "A gay and robust tone pervades the place." "We all of us—parents, children, and teachers alike—laugh a great deal." Yes, the school gives the kids a good life while it is giving them good academic training. Those of us who know the school well, the thousands of teachers who visit it each year feel this. I think the readers of this book will feel it, too.

Richard Carver Wood
A Little Red School Pupil

That is what makes this book of interest to those who *like* children. It is of interest to professional teachers. It analyzes the general curriculum; gives detailed programs of children from four through thirteen years; describes the trips these children take, and their experiences in the June camp when the school moves to the country; gives verbatim reports of discussions. It also shows the share that teachers take in the administration.

The book is of interest to parents, not merely because of the children's experiences, but because of the parents' share in the total school. "We" distinctly includes the parents. It is of interest to writers. The fresh direct imagery in these children's language, the spontaniety, the rhythm, the social sensitivity should give a lift—or a jolt—to writers for children. It is of interest to the psychologist. These children can almost be said to have "cultures," so close is their school life to their inner life of impulses and concepts.

Above all, the book is of interest to those who look for a practical way of creating this precious thing we call democracy. Here is no talking about democracy. Here is democracy being convincingly lived.

Have I shown why the public should wish to read the autobiography of the Little Red School House?

Lucy Sprague Mitchell is head of the Bank Street Schools. Her own schools have been among the most interesting and successful experiments in recent education.

Platonic Love

WOMEN IN CYCLES OF CULTURE. By Anne de Koven. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1941. 333 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by ELIZABETH COX WRIGHT

MRS. REGINALD DE KOVEN'S account of the influence of women from antiquity to seventeenth century France is made up of sketches of a succession of famous women, all more or less exemplifying a twofold idea. This idea is foreshadowed in the preface: that woman's power, fallaciously ascribed to her intuition, actually springs from her practical sense, her ability to detach herself from creative absorption; that further, it is not by her power but by the subtler factor in influence, that woman has really dominated cultural epochs. This influence springs from the place she holds in man's "dreams of happiness, here and hereafter," and from the fact that to him, woman is "the very gate of heaven." Tracing the Platonic ideal of the heavenly pilgrimage, which through "worship of pure love, pure beauty, ascends to unity with divinity" from its conception when the love was confined to the experience of men, Mrs. de Koven arrives at her thesis, that the inclusion of women in this duo of love is necessary for the flowering of civilization. In Marguerite of Navarre, who first included woman in this duo, she sees the nexus of her idea; Marguerite's position was foreshadowed by the troubadours inspired by Eleanor of Aquitaine and revived by Mme. de Lafayette in her exemplification of the supremacy of the soul over the body.

Whether this is philosophically or psychologically sound may remain the reader's problem to decide; Mrs. de Koven has chosen the historical treatment of her theme. Beginning with Semiramis, the first two chapters reach the threshold of the Troubadour period and bring the reader to France where landscape and traditions are familiar and dear to the author. The literary spirit of Provence and the courts of love is communicated fully: "Provence, whose name in the world's imagination rhymes with that of the rose and the nightingale, whose flowering meadows seem still to echo with the dancing feet of the shepherd and his lass." Eleanor's life, vigorously told, symbolizes the conflict between woman's power through her practical abilities and her influence through the power of love, but the succeeding stories of medieval French women have less significance. It is curious that Joan of Arc is only given small space, and Eloise is not even mentioned. The discussion of the women of the Italian

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Renaissance brings out clearly the practical sense that gave them power, and suggests that the emphasis by Castiglione and others on the basic Platonic exclusion of women from the soul's quest was indicative of the cultural state that produced these women. With Marguerite of Navarre's revolutionary expansion of the idea of Platonic love not only to include, but indeed to imply, the love of man and woman for each other, was born a new idea of civilization. Its growth was retarded by Elizabeth Tudor and Catherine de Medici, but it was fulfilled by the women and the society of seventeenth century France.

The result of this survey reflects wide and sympathetic reading, but it does not show grasp of historical principles even intuitively attained. Its written sources are biography and memoir, and usually out-of-date works of general historical purpose. In its use of sources other than written, lies the characteristic quality of this book. Mrs. de Koven shows a deeply poetic sense of the beauty of the Platonic ideal as she understands it. She has more than the layman's knowledge of the periods and places she discusses, especially of France. This knowledge comes from long acquaintance with the countryside, the architecture, the painting, and the cultural legends of the land she loves so deeply. Much that is readable and pleasant, for the author has the fluency and sophistication of the professional writer, much that is poignant and dramatic, appears here. "Two lives she led, the outer of discretion and dignity, but the inner like an inextinguishable conflagration," she says of Louise Labé! But the weakness of the book lies in the fact that imaginative re-creation of details of time, country, or personality does not produce the biography of an idea. The modern social historian cannot believe that woman's influence throughout history is in any way summed up in a Semiramis, a Sappho, an Eleanor of Aquitaine, or a Mme. de Sevigné. And charming and detailed as is the handling of Marguerite of Navarre, it does not really prove revolutionary Marguerite's amplification of the Platonic ideal of love of man for man as stressed by the Renaissance Platonists.

Elizabeth Cox Wright is a member of the department of English at Swarthmore College.

On February 27, at the annual conference of the Secondary Education Board, there will be an informal discussion of "What the College Freshman should Know about the Use of Books and Libraries."

Many Things to Many Men

A TREASURY OF DEMOCRACY. Edited by Norman Cousins. New York: Coward-McCann, Inc. 1942. 300 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by GEORGE N. SHUSTER

ONE of the first selections in Mr. Cousins's rich and interesting collection of comments on democracy is the following aphorism by Lao-Tzu: "Govern a great nation as you would cook a small fish." It is an admirably realistic bit of political advice, and the fact that it has been chosen for inclusion will give you some idea of the flavor of this anthology. Mr. Cousins says he has no illusions about the scope of his book, realizing that it inevitably reflects the temper of his own mind, and that no such book can ever include all the good things. Nevertheless I must insert parenthetically that his friends might do well to suggest additions for future printings—a passage or two from Savonarola, for example, who earned his spurs in the literary campaign against Renaissance tyranny.

Democracy, this volume helps one to see, is much more than a mere excuse for self-satisfaction on the part of those who happen not to live in a totalitarian country. It is a tentative form of political living adopted by those who first of all know how valuable freedom is, and who then realize how difficult the struggle for freedom must always be. Mr. Cousins's book has a first part, in which the centuries

are combed for statements about democracy, thus understood. Greeks, medieval philosophers, and modern thinkers concur in feeling that the autocrat is a reprehensible creature. "Lust of power is the most flagrant of all the passions," said Cornelius Tacitus. But the same Roman wrote, "It is easier for a republican form of government to be applauded than realized"; and it is with this dour yet healing truth that the ages have been most concerned. Thus Thomas Paine and the medieval scholastics agree that the blessings of liberty will be garnered only by those who till the soil from which liberty springs.

There has been, during recent years, a marked tendency to feel that democratic institutions are spigots out of which privileges and profits flow without much obligation on the part of those who turn the spigots on. Our government, some have held, is merely a sort of bank on which the citizen can draw whenever he desires to do so. Mr. Cousins's compendium of aphorisms will help to rid the world of such delusions. The past warns with Lincoln that the great task always remains before us. This anthology is rich in winged passages which proclaim the dignity of the free human spirit, the valor of service in the common cause, and the permanent beauty of social institutions founded on aversion to tyranny.

The second part of Mr. Cousins's volume contains seventy-seven statements by contemporaries on various aspects of the democratic experience. Authors as diverse as President Roosevelt and Thomas Mann explain what the term "democracy" means to them, and have something to add about its fate in the modern world. Here again the absence of dithyrambs is refreshing. Herbert Agar, who comes near the beginning of the second, and Stefan Zweig, who comes at the end, agree that nothing is gained by lip-service to the creed of freedom, but that success depends upon honest appraisal of mistakes and weaknesses. There is clearly something in what Mr. Van Loon says: "That is the State I want. Call it whatever you like but I would say, don't call it Democracy. We want the allegiance of the younger generation and they will not have what we *now* call Democracy and God knows, I cannot blame them!" It seems to me that Mr. Cousins's book can be not so much a reminder of what has been as a prophecy of what shall be if we who cling to the democratic faith so desire. It is, in the best sense of a much-abused term, a genuinely American conservative manifesto.

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A Song of France

ALL MEN HAVE LOVED THEE. (A Song of France). By Harold C. Geyer. New York: Richard R. Smith. 1941. 196 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by ANDRÉ MAUROIS

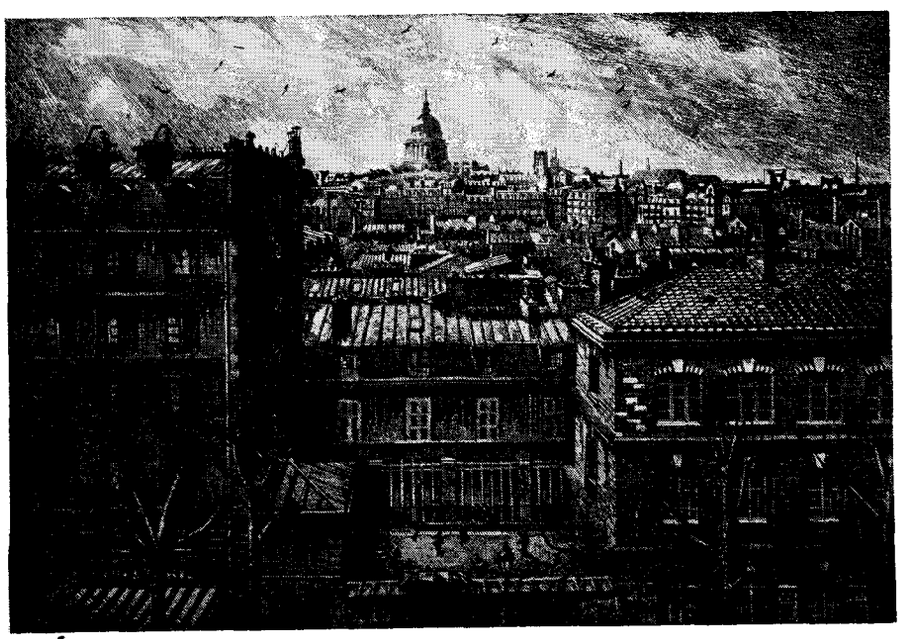
IF you can imagine that Robert Browning once published a book on France, together with Rockwell Kent and some brilliant letter-writer poet like Rupert Brooke or George Gordon Byron, then perhaps you will begin to have an idea of this very unusual and, in many ways, fascinating work. It contains moving poems on the spirit of France, lively letters on French politics, on Montparnasse studios, on models and riots, on cathedrals and blondes; it contains excellent etchings and drawings which show strange and true aspects of Paris streets. In fact my only grievance with the book is that it contains too much. There is in it all that is necessary to make a work of real beauty—and a little more.

The "little more" consists essentially of newspaper *montages*. To sandwich between letters and poems, a few editorials and headlines from the Paris press was not at all a bad idea. It reminded one of some of the early John Dos Passos novels, and it awakened unexpected memories of recent events. We all forget so quickly and we have seen so much within eight years that an article written in 1934 already strikes us as being part of a mysterious, exotic, and hardly believable history. My only objection to Harold Geyer's cuttings are that they are too many, and not quite the genuine thing. They look like imitation front pages and, though accurate enough, are not quite convincing. It would have been better, I think, to print photographs of authentic French headlines.

However this is only a side show and the main tent affords nothing but delight. It is melancholy delight because the Paris so well evoked by Harold Geyer is at present a sad and oppressed town. The reader looks wistfully at a lovely etching of some Utrillo-like urban scene and wonders whether German officers are not turning that corner. Or he admires a portrait of a postman and thinks: "When shall I once more open my door to this formidable and kindly moustache?" Harold Geyer, from his little attic room, could see the Panthéon, Notre-Dame, and a wide sea of Paris roofs. He revives for us the beauty of the town and for this we can never be thankful enough.

When an American loves France, he understands her better than a man of any other nation. He loves her just as she is, which is after all the only way to love. Harold Geyer lived in France during our worst years, when the Stavisky case and the Sixth of February riots divided Frenchmen so deeply that they forgot to look East and to prepare for the terrible future that was in store for them. But he was wise enough to understand that political strife was not what really mattered in France. He went to Troyes and learnt to know the Cathedral and its "shifting perspectives" of stone. He realized that the old Cathedral, visible symbol of holiness was, even today, "woven centrally" into the scheme of the city, "a living and growing thing." He realized that French civilization had lived a thousand years and could not die in a month because a few man had failed to do their job.

"What have we here? What kind of a book is this?" asks the first line of the first poem. And the answer is not only: "The diary of an art student who spent a year in an attic room, at the *Grand Hôtel des Gobelins* and recorded, in etchings and letters, his vivid and sensitive impressions," but the diary of an art student who was also a poet and a philosopher and who had the wisdom to listen to "the songs of stone and glass that trumpet the rapture of a vanished time." O France, Have really all men loved thee? No, not all men, but all who were worthy of thee, and the American author of this song of France is certainly one of them.



—*From "All Men Have Loved Thee."*

The Roofs of Paris

An Abridged Version

A SHORTENED HISTORY OF ENGLAND. By George Macaulay Trevelyan. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1942. 590 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

THE qualities of George Macaulay Trevelyan as a historian are too well known to require long description. He combines a breadth of scholarship, an ease and brilliance of style, and a facility of emphatic generalization not unworthy of his illustrious greatuncle with a political and social point of view which Thomas Babington Macaulay would recognize at once, and a robust patriotism which would probably make any nineteenth century liberal a little uneasy. His real command of his material, his vigorous treatment of it, and his carefully correct opinions about it have already made his single volume history of England a widely popular book ever since it was published in 1926. Historians and schoolboys have found it almost equally stimulating, and it is warranted not to upset the most intellectually timid of headmasters. It is a safe guess that this new abridged version will also be popular. With so much of contemporary interest going on, few will miss the material that has been cut out—mostly from the medieval and early modern sections—and though most readers will be disappointed by the brevity and thinness of the added material, there is only one sentence, the suggestion that it might have been better all round had Mussolini been successfully appeased, which most readers will find thoroughly objectionable.

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A Modern Grote

THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE HELLENISTIC WORLD. By M. Rostovtzeff. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1941. 3 *vols.* 1779 *pp., with index.* $30.

Reviewed by C. A. ROBINSON, JR.

WHEN Rostovtzeff, the distinguished classicist at Yale, received an honorary degree recently at the University of Chicago semicentennial—an honor which had also come to him at the Harvard tercentennary—*Life* magazine was moved to compare him with Grote and Gibbon. It is a fair comparison, except that the task confronting Rostovtzeff was far greater, since modern research (especially in the field of archaeology) has enormously magnified the student's problem, and Rostovtzeff's work is more accurate and more comprehensive.

Rostovtzeff's great gift is his ability to see the picture whole. Possessed, no doubt, of an amazing memory, untiring industry, and a command of many languages—witness the thousands of references which fill his third volume—he is able to summarize and illumine entire epochs of human history. In 1926, after he had already produced more articles and books than the ordinary scholar can hope to write in a life time, he published his monumental "Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire," a work which was subsequently translated into German, Italian, and Spanish. Now in 1941, after yet more articles and books, he gives us these three magnificent volumes. They will be studied by students for years, but I rather suspect that they will also be bought by that section of the population which delights in owning the best of its kind, particularly when that best represents a milestone in the history of human endeavor. Much of the text, needless to say, will fascinate the layman, as will the 112 plates; incidentally, the manufacture of the volumes by the Oxford University Press is a tribute to England at war or peace.

Rostovtzeff writes of the three centuries that separate Alexander the Great (died 323 B.C.) and the Roman emperor Augustus, the period when Hellenism or Greek culture became widespread. Alexander is probably the most important European in history, for he found the Greeks restricted, as they had been for centuries, to certain areas of the Mediterranean and Black Seas and made it possible for them to inherit a vast new world to the East. By thus giving a new direction to Greek culture and making it world-wide, he permanently altered the course of history itself. If some of Alexander's ideas took root slowly, such as that of the brotherhood of man, nevertheless his idea of the *oecumene,* the inhabited world, found immediate acceptance. In the Hellenistic Age man thought of himself more and more as a member of a world society, a society in which there might be (and were) sharp differences, but in which a common culture nonetheless acted as a natural bond. This common culture was different from that of Periclean days, for it was affected both by the rapid rise of the ordinary man and by close contact with Orientalism. It was this new culture of the Hellenistic Age, in certain respects diluted and in others vitalized, which served as the vehicle of Christianity and Hellenized Rome and Europe.

We are particularly struck by the complexities and contradictions, in fact by the very modernity, of the Hellenistic Age. Side by side with luxury and sophistication existed poverty and slavery. Mass production and far-flung trade-routes meant wealth, a widening horizon, and social revolution. It meant, too, that new lands—Egypt, India, Turkestan, Iran, China, Arabia, Central Africa, Western Africa, Western Europe—now came, in one way or another, within the orbit of the Greeks. Trade, law, understanding, racial mixture to some extent, and a *lingua franca* (Greek) made the Hellenistic world a single culture-sphere in spite of much warfare.

To understand the individual problems of this vast world and to control the mass of coins, papyri, and other material is difficult enough. But Rostovtzeff has also been able to detect the reaction of class upon class, race upon race, area upon area, and, sweeping it all together into a coherent whole, to paint with broad and bold strokes the social and economic history of mankind during three critical centuries.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

A LITERARY ALPHABET

This week's quiz is the contribution of E. V. Stewart, of Louisville, Kentucky. Tersely described in each line is a famous writer. Can you identify them? Allowing 4 points for each one correctly named, a score of 60 is par, 72 is good, and 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 13.

A was an ancient of tragical trend,
B a biographer known through his friend.

C although Pólish could write English well;
D an Italian, journey through hell.

E was an erudite ecclesiastic;
F was a Frenchman far from monastic.

G was a giant, Germanic, sagacious;
H was Hebraic, romantic, audacious.

I an iconoclast, breaking penates;
J was a Jovian with an Achates.

K wrote of soldiers in India's clime;
L penned an Indian legend in rhyme.

M was a mystic, a maker of dreams;
N was a neophyte with theistic themes.

O 's forte is stories of spies international;
P planned poetic effects that were rational.

Q 's a detective whose art never fails;
R was a scurrilous teller of tales.

S wrote a satire that children adore;
T was a Russian who aided the poor.

U was uniquely without competition;
V was a voice reversing tradition.

W 's barbaric yawp was stentorian;
X was a Greek military historian.

Y 's labeled Irish, poetic, dramatic;
Z wrote of Frenchmen whose lives were erratic.

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THE SEARCH FOR TALENT

WITH the regularity and inevitability of the seasons comes the publisher's familiar complaint about the difficulty of finding new talent. His sad but stereotyped story is that conspicuous new talent of the Steinbeck and Wolfe calibre is either non-existent or, if it does exist, is next to impossible to find.

Nor are publishers the only ones to take up positions outside this literary wailing wall. Crowding them for standing room are film producers whose anguish over the lack of new literary genius is matched only by their anxiety to pay fabulous sums to such genius if only it would reveal itself. "We are ready to pay well into six figures," one such producer told us with a slightly glazed and wild look in his eye, as though he were offering a prize for a living specimen from Mars, "if only we could find another Ben Hecht." And so, indeed, he would.

There is a problem, to be sure, but it is doubtful whether it concerns the lack of new talent as much as it does the machinery through which the publisher or producer hopes to attract or uncover that talent. Hollywood has its fabulous salaries and the publishers have their prize contests (the increasing number of these contests seem to indicate that they are becoming standard equipment with almost every book house), but fishing with a golden hook is not enough. Some thought must be given to the spawning ground and the water itself. For most writers are neither born nor made; they are developed. Ask any new writer which he would rather do—enter his manuscript in a prize competition or send it to a publisher where he knows it will receive a careful and sympathetic reading plus honest advice—and don't be surprised if he chooses the latter.

For over and above prize contests as bait for new writers there remains a vast and as yet only partially explored area where publishers and new authors can and should meet. Somewhere on this meeting-ground books will be considered not as rigid entities to be accepted or rejected on the basis of intrinsic merit, but as the products of young authors who, given the proper encouragement and nursing, can develop whatever potentialities they do have.

These are broad statements, certain to draw return fire calling attention to the vast number of authors whose ultimate success traces directly to long years of this very handling by editors and publishers. But even granting this, it is still possible to argue that there is not nearly enough of it. Moreover, there is still too much of a tendency to look for the finished and polished product—as though distinguished literary talent erupts in full-bloom perfection the first crack out of the box. There is still too much of an atmosphere of dead weight attached to unsolicited manuscripts, creating the impression that those manuscripts are not only unsolicited but uninvited. Not many months ago a very prominent publisher sent out a publicity release, declaring with emphasis and pride that only one unsolicited manuscript had ever been accepted and published by his firm. This announcement was no doubt intended to highlight the merits of the particular book that won the particular distinction, but it is not difficult to imagine the effect of this announcement upon many a new writer who already may fear that he has to cut through all sorts of intricate traps and barricades before he can be published.

If something of the energy now going into prize contests would be put into removing the stigma now attached to unsolicited manuscripts; if new writers were made to feel that getting their first book published no longer need be like climbing up the sides of a greased elephant; if in short, publishers made themselves more *accessible* to new writers—much, much more accessible than many of them now are—then we could go a long way toward answering the fear that the wells of new talent are drying up.

Admittedly, literary genius, in the truest sense of the term, is hardly a phenomenon of abundance. But what there is of it will be easier to find if only we can prove that we won't look the other way when it asks to be heard.

N. C.

To A Young Friend

By Robert Nathan

YOU asked me:
Cannot youth save the world?
Cannot the young build here, on this earth, a shining house,
Out of our hearts, out of our good intentions??
And I made some stupid reply;
I think I said, No.
Now that you are gone, I think, as always, of the things I should have said to you:
How youth is a seed, falling across the earth,
Blowing over the land, forever blowing, forever falling;
How some of it finds good soil, and grows with beauty,
How some of it withers to death among the stones . . .
Here, in one spot, roses; and elsewhere, the desert.
(Someone else said that, long ago;—do you remember?)
Loam and sand, the seed falls, it cannot keep from falling.
How youth is a wave, rolling away in all directions,
Part of it to break against rocks, or die on the beaches,
Or in the great calms—
And yet, how the wave itself must rush on, foaming, far out into the distance,
Into the darkness . . .
And the next wave,
And the next,
Forever rising, forever breaking . . .
Those are the things I should have told you.
I do not know why I did not remember them.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Carrying On

SIR:—Your readers may be interested in several portions of a letter which came to me this morning from Christina Foyle, Secretary of the Book Club, daughter of the well-known second-hand bookseller of London:

Miss Emily Bax,
Women's City Club of New York,
55 West 44th Street (4th floor),
New York, N. Y., U.S.A.

25th November, 1941.

Dear Miss Bax,

We were one of the first victims of Hitler's bombers. They dropped a tremendous bomb just outside the shop, and blasted the entire place.

Although it caused a great deal of damage, the bomb had also its good side.

Many of the members of our Book Clubs are members of the Forces, and men and women working long hours in munitions factories all over the country. To these people—most of whom are miles away from their homes, in isolated districts—a service such as ours is a great help. Through the Clubs they are assured of regular delivery of one really good book every month, and letters received here daily confirm how much our selections are appreciated. Sailors, too, are included among our members, and after naval disasters—such as the sinking of the *Ark Royal,* we have to go through our records and make many alterations. Prisoners of War, also figure prominently on our lists, and considerable care has to be taken when supplying them with books. Copies of Dennis Wheatley's "Faked Passports," which were automatically sent to these members, were returned in their hundreds from Germany and Italy.

Despite difficulties, we have succeeded in carrying on with our monthly Literary Luncheons throughout the war. We feel that in this way we are doing something to help the general public in giving them something to think about apart from the war. Of course, many of these functions have been devoted to political subjects, and speakers have included General de Gaulle, General Sikorski, Mr. Duff Cooper, Lt. Col. Moore Brabazon, Mr. Anthony Eden, and many other notable people.

The regular arrival of mails from abroad is an encouraging proof of our naval supremacy. We receive about 20,000 letters every day from all over the world—from the United States, from our Dominions and Colonies, and from the neutral and allied countries, as well as from the German prison camps.

American literature is extremely popular in England during these days, and is, in fact, almost ousting our own. Best-sellers are books by newspaper correspondents—such as Quentin Reynolds, Polly Peabody, Ralph Ingersoll, and Ernest Hemingway. Another book which is having a very wide sale is the "Bedside Esquire," which figures prominently in Christmas gift lists this year.

CHRISTINA FOYLE.

"This isn't exactly a book for little boys, but if you're *really* and *truly* going to be a doctor . . . "

Double Identity

SIR:—Please do not fail me. Page sixteen of the November first issue has a note saying, "Katherine Rodell is the author of 'South American Primer'." Having tried twice to get this book from libraries in the state, I am asking whether or not your note is accurate. Twice I have had Katherine Carr's "South American Primer" suggested as a substitute. How trustworthy will I find the information in the latter?

RUTH C. FREY.

[*Ed. Note: As a substitute, Miss Carr's volume cannot be excelled; Miss Carr happens to be Mrs. Rodell. At any rate, the new, revised edition of "South American Primer" is published under Miss Carr's married name.*]

"Whose Storm?"

SIR:—[*SRL,* Dec. 13): a letter from Elsie Briggs, of Boston, which you have headed "Whose Storm Is It?"

In the second quotation, either the writer of the letter has made a mistake, or else I don't like your proofreader. It is not "if such a *mind* could rise," but "such a *wind.*" This, and the first quotation, are from Dickens's "David Copperfield," and descriptive of the great storm at Yarmouth, when Steerforth was cast ashore "amidst the ruins of the home he had wronged."

The third quotation is perhaps from "The Cricket on the Hearth," also by Dickens, though I have no recollection of it, but am certain it has no connection with the Yarmouth storm.

LOUISE S. WATERBURY.

Portland, Maine

Miss Isabel Keats, of Louisville

SIR:—Recently I found the following item about the family of George Keats, brother of John, in the Boston Almanac for 1844, under the heading of "General Events in 1843," page 61, item 30. Perhaps the readers of your correspondence columns would find it of interest. I have seen no mention of the item in Keats biographies. It is of interest as showing the status of Keats's reputation in Boston ninety-eight years ago.

Miss Isabel R. Keats, of Louisville, Ky., on Saturday night, after conversing as usual with the family till about 10 o'clock in the evening, retired; but shortly after returned to the parlor, the family having left, to procure something, it is said, for the tooth-ache. Shortly after there was a report of a gun. Persons immediately rushed into the room, and found her weltering in blood. The charge had dreadfully lacerated her neck and breast. She persisted in saying that she did not mean to kill herself, while she lived, which was several hours. How came she to have the gun? This is a point not satisfactorily explained. She was a niece of John Keats, an English poet of some celebrity.

DOROTHY TYLER.

Detroit.

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Dissenting Opinions

This is an occasional department in which authors and SRL *contributors are invited to express their disagreement, small or large, with material appearing in these columns. This week's column, by* NYM WALES, *concerns the review by Howard Mumford Jones of "Dragon Seed," by Pearl Buck, published in our issue of January* 24, 1942.

I HAVE read Howard Mumford Jones's review of Mrs. Buck's latest Book-of-the-Month novel with much interest, but with the feeling that perhaps such critics are becoming hypercritical of the Noble Prize winner, demanding that she live up to her own standard in "The Good Earth," and failing to see the present volume in a larger perspective. With such prolific and versatile output behind her, one must look at Pearl Buck steadily, if not as a whole. She must be judged here for her new departure as a novelist of war and present-day conflict. Timely war novels are seldom "works of art," the main question Mr. Jones raises. Yet certainly Mrs. Buck succeeded in what she set out to do, which was to describe the effect of Japanese conquest upon the pattern of Chinese peasant-family life.

One should not fail to comment that "Dragon Seed" is far the finest novel dealing with the conflict in the East that has yet appeared here, and compares well with any other novel that has come out of the present cataclysm. And, it may be asked, what other woman writer has done better along this line? I have just read a translated manuscript, however, being published in a few weeks, called "Village in August," which will provide a most interesting comparison with Pearl Buck's writing on Chinese peasant life and reaction to war. This excellent war novel by T'ien Chün, the first modern Chinese novel to appear in English, was written by a Chinese out of his own experience and for his own people to read, and we have no authentic communication with the Chinese mind and psychology. It also deals with a Chinese village under Japanese occupation.

I do not agree that "Dragon Seed" is a "watered-down formula," as Mr. Jones comments. It seems to me that, for several reasons, this novel indicates that Pearl Buck is growing, not declining. It has the basic workmanship of her best efforts, and the materials for as important a book as "The Good Earth," though this more complicated scene is not so gracefully handled. It has a new warmth and aliveness, beside which the Wang Lung saga seems now comparatively empty of live ideas and meaning—which timelessness was, of course, its charm. Her characters here are much more human, and therefore more "Chinese," and their relationships more natural and unstrained. This is shown, for instance, in the marriage relationships between the old parents and between Jade and her husband. There is also a new humor, characteristic of the Chinese, which remedies a lack in the sombre "Good Earth." And there is plenty of the same ecstatic and endless conceiving and childbirth which seems to account for some of Pearl Buck's popularity—at least that is what one of her Connecticut women readers just explained to me.

Most important, as a sign of growth, is the fact that Mrs. Buck is not content with her laurels, not afraid to turn her hand toward present-day problems and conflicts, even at the risk of being called that dreadful word "propagandist" instead of artist. My former criticism of her work as a valid interpretation of Chinese peasant and family life, was its disregard of one prime factor: the suffering, worry, and bitter discontent caused by the landlord and debt problem and heavy taxation. No picture of a Chinese village in the past two generations can be complete without this element, which has produced such widespread agrarian distress. In "The Good Earth" I did not consider the poor-boy-makes-good motif legitimate (either as plot or authenticity) where Wang Lung's family accidentally finds enough jewelry to get a new start in life and rises on the basis of this to riches and prosperity. This could hardly happen four hundred and fifty million times among the poor Chinese peasants. The first part of "Dragon Seed" is still a village idyll rather than a sound portrayal of the actual economic framework of Chinese peasant life.

One must agree with Mr. Jones that the black-and-white treatment of the Chinese and Japanese is a step from grace—very surprising coming from Mrs. Buck—and spoils the artistry and dramatic balance of the book. Such atrocities have documentary proof, yet retailing them repetitiously is not the best of form in fiction. However, he is a little unfair, for there are only a few such pages and the rest of the book is sound. Had the words "evil" and "wicked" and a few leering Nipponese eyes been omitted occasionally, and some of the atrocities explained, the book would have been first-rate. Cruelty is a deliciate subject in connection with China and Japan, and calls to mind the atrocities of the Chinese themselves in their numerous civil wars, which even now continue unpublicized, though civil war is in abeyance. Such cruelty and contempt for subject women is a condition of feudal standards and psychology (of which Hitlerism has many remnants and revivals), and did not make charming reading in the Europe of the Middle Ages, either, as Voltaire and his associates often pointed out.

The Japanese are rendered incredible monsters in the book, but I do not agree that the Chinese are all virtuously white, or the "Young China" characters "unbelievable in fictional terms." Mrs. Buck has tended in the past to underestimate and even to make caricatures of modern changing Chinese youth (which is a criticism the Chinese make of her work), but here she has created her best characters of this type. From my own experience, however, I should still say that Lao San lacks the consciousness and enthusiasm of a typical guerrilla leader, being motivated only by revenge and lust for killing, not even washing his hands after his deeds.

It is very unlike Pearl Buck to be unbalanced in her judgments, either of people or of nations. She has a rare liberal and open mind, highly sensitive to change and full of curiosity. She has also a rare intuition and perception for fairness and objectivity. One might have criticized her for lack of feeling and of constructive ideas for the solution of the larger problems that confront human society everywhere today and especially in China. But where she loses artistry in "Dragon Seed," she gains impact, and her new indignation is a sign of awareness and aliveness, a coming out of the artist's shell which is becoming essential to the thinking novelist of our troubled times.

I do not think Mrs. Buck has unduly idealized the Chinese villager in this novel, though she looks upon him in a heroic moment. Again, this is a sign of continued growth, for it is a healthy admiration for the very real struggle and change that is living Chinese history. Mrs. Buck has tended to accept human nature and society as it was in China, content to describe rather than to interpret, even to exclude the possibility of intrinsic development, and to disregard the duty of the novelist to occasionally produce

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a character significantly changed by the social upheaval bearing down upon him.

In one important point, however, her treatment of the subject—of a Chinese village under Japanese occupation—is unconvincing and untrue to facts. The Japanese do not ordinarily walk out and directly collect taxes and count the livestock, etc., but utilize the village elders for this purpose through the clever *pao chia* system of "mutual guarantees." In this, every ten families is the unit and the head is responsible for carrying out Japanese orders, sometimes with the aid of conscripted *min tuan*. Because of her failure to bring such Chinese into the picture, one feels an emptiness in her interpretation, what Mr. Jones calls "patriotic overtones," rather than a deeper consciousness of the complexities of the actual situation.

Pearl Buck's fans would certainly object strenuously if she should drop the Biblical "mannered style" which Mr. Jones finds renders her story monotonous and remote. Her style is much livelier here, anyway, with fewer sentences starting with the traditional "And" and "Now." This style has become not only the skin but the flesh and bone of her method. Pearl Buck's great contribution has been to universalize the primitive, elemental life of the Chinese peasant in a timeless way, and it was her great stroke of genius that she developed a rhythmic style to create the necessary mood-simple, direct and even labored in its monotonous rhythms, as peasant and farm life was everywhere before the machine age, and still is in China. Who would prefer "Kristin Lavransdatter" or other books of the soil in different language? For the China village scene, Mrs. Buck's style is highly legitimate, even in dealing with the latest in China's long history of wars. This is particularly true because it is a good approach to a translation of the rhythm and simplicities of the Chinese storyteller's art, as Mrs. Buck herself says is her method. Her sizeable public seems to find it a relief from the monotony and mannerism of the day-to-day novels that pour off the presses.

Nym Wales (Mrs. Edgar Snow), who has lived and traveled extensively in the Far East, is the author of "China Builds for Democracy."

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

Aeschylus, Boswell, Conrad, Dante, Erasmus, France, Goethe, Heine, Ibsen, Johnson, Kipling, Longfellow, Maeterlinck, Newman, Oppenheim, Poe, Queen, Rabelais, Swift, Tolstoy, Udall, Voltaire, Whitman, Xenephon, Yeats, and Zola.

So You Think You Know About Democracy

Try this "Quiz for Americans"

From the richly stored pages of *A Treasury of Democracy* we have selected a very few pertinent utterances on democracy. Can you identify the speaker? After each quotation check the name you believe to be correct. Then turn to page 16 for the answers and see what your score is.

a. To speak his thoughts is every freeman's right, in peace and war, in council and in fight. *(Abraham Lincoln, Homer, Eleanor Roosevelt)*

b. The strangest thing I ever saw was an aged tyrant. *(Thales, Harold L. Ickes, Voltaire)*

c. All men are by nature equal. *(Thomas Jefferson, Plato, Thomas Paine)*

d. Give me liberty to know, to think, to believe, and to utter freely, according to conscience, above all other liberties. *(Rousseau, John Locke, John Milton)*

e. God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it. *(Daniel Webster, John Dewey, Herbert Spencer)*

f. It is easier to resist at the beginning than at the end. *(Winston Churchill, Patrick Henry, Leonardo da Vinci)*

g. 'Tis time to fear when tyrants seem to kiss. *(Fiorello La Guardia, William Shakespeare, Aristophanes)*

h. I must have liberty. *(Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine, William Shakespeare)*

i. Men of good-will are always at peace; men of good repute and dignity are men of good-will. *(Baltasar Gracián, Jules Romains, Sophocles)*

j. When the tyrant has disposed of foreign enemies by conquest or treaty, and there is nothing to fear from them, then he is always stirring up some war or other, in order that the people may require a leader. *(Plato, John Gunther, Henry Clay)*

k. Awake, arise, or be forever fallen! *(Confucius, Winston Churchill, John Milton)*

l. Liberty will not descend to a people; a people must raise themselves to liberty; it is a blessing that must be earned before it can be enjoyed. *(Abraham Cowley, Andrew Marvell, Archibald MacLeish)*

m. No individual, nor an inconsiderable number of individuals, can enslave a nation. *(George Washington, John Taylor, Robert E. Sherwood)*

n. Democracy . . . is a condition where people believe that other people are as good as they are. *(Louis Adamic, Stuart Chase, James Madison)*

o. I do not agree with a word you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it. *(Rousseau, Voltaire, Mazzini)*

p. Ne'er yet by force was freedom overcome. *(Alexander Hamilton, Cordell Hull, James Thomson)*

q. They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. *(Benjamin Franklin, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Theodore Roosevelt)*

r. The ground of liberty must be gained by inches. *(John Hancock, Thomas Jefferson, George Washington)*

s. Free peoples, be mindful of this maxim: "Liberty may be gained, but can never be recovered!" *(Jean Jacques Rousseau, John Dryden, Herbert Agar)*

t. All might be free if they valued freedom, and defended it as they ought. *(Edward Benes, Jan Masaryk, Samuel Adams)*

u. What mighty perils wait the man who meddles with a State. *(Charles Churchill, Adam Smith, Oliver Goldsmith)*

v. He who allows oppression shares the crime. *(Harold L. Ickes, Samuel Johnson, Erasmus Darwin)*

w. Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God. *(Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Wendell L. Willkie)*

x. He certainly is not a wise man, who folds his arms . . . seeing with unconcern the flames that have invaded his neighbor's house, without any endeavors to extinguish them. *(John Dickinson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Pericles)*

y. Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? *(Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George, Patrick Henry)*

z. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal. *(Thomas Jefferson, George Washington, John Hancock)*

EVERY writer contributing to this quiz and scores of others are included in *A Treasury of Democracy*. All races and nations, all kinds of freedom-loving men and women *since the beginning of history* have contributed to this volume. It contains *more quotations* than any other book in the same field—a long and continuous pageant of liberty. And in addition it contains original contributions from 75 notable contemporaries who state their position on democracy in this time of crisis. *With an epilogue by Stephen Vincent Benét.*

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Edited by NORMAN COUSINS

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THE ARTIST AND POLITICS

(*Continued from page* 4)

of her environment, the world of the split atom and the concentration camps. But what if the narrow surroundings which conditioned her character bear in fact no relation whatever to those unpleasant events which we obstinately call the essentials? Do not millions of Sylvias exist who are neither political nor non-political but simply a-political; and is it not possible to write quite good books about them?

I believe that the answer to this question is, surprisingly enough, not a matter of opinion but of a highly technical nature. I believe that the Sylvia-type of novel, be it ever so well written, involves a breach of the basic law of novel-writing: the law of the special "novel-perspective." This law is founded on the distinction between "real character" and "novel character."

Let us imagine a human being living on an island isolated from the rest of the world, and with no knowledge of the rest of the world. His *real* character is of course conditioned by his immediate environment. Yet as a *novel* character the most interesting thing about him will be his ignorance of the essentials of his time, his (negative) relation to the background. We see him in the specific novel-perspective: that is, *we know more about him than he knows about himself.* We have included in our vision the background of the towns, mountains, and rivers unknown to him; and only by seeing him in proportion to these towns, rivers, and mountains did we give him novel-life. In other words: his novel-character is conditioned not by his narrow island-surroundings which condition his real life, but by distant surroundings with which he has no point of contact whatever. If I cut these distant surroundings out of my mind he will in reality be still alive, but for the novel he is dead. And are the concentration camps, the factory chimneys, and the flame-throwers less real or portentous than the rivers and mountains?

The law of the novel-perspective prescribes that it is not enough for the author to create "real life," he must also locate its geometrical place in a coördinate-system, the axes of which are represented by the dominating facts, ideas, and tendencies of his time; he must fix its position in an n-dimensional space-time continuum. The real Sylvia spins around the centre of a narrow family vortex of conditioning factors, whereas the author, in promoting her to novel life, places her in the centre of a vortex formed by the great trade winds, typhoons, depressions, and hurricanes of her time.

Only this way, it seems, can the novelist keep on the main road, avoid the side-tracks and dead ends. His greatness is in direct proportion to the width and depth of his vision, which indeed is an almost measurable quality for purposes of comparison. His window has to be filled with an all-embracing view even if his subject is only a garden with a young lady in it. His ears have to be filled with the harmonies and discords of the great symphony, even if his attention is concentrated on the voice of a single flute. "Where there is hope in the air he will hear it; where there is agony about he will feel it." (Day Lewis).

Being a contemporary of ours, what he feels will be mainly agony. Looking out through the window he may greet the lady with the roses by the opening question of Auden's "Orators": "What do you think about England, this country of ours where nobody is well?" Instead of England he may of course put the name of any other country, continent, of the whole planet. In other periods it may seem that to care for politics is a temptation for the artist. In periods like the present the temptation is not to care for politics.

The fact that wherever he looks through the window he finds only landscapes where nobody is well, suggests that there must be some reason, some common denominator in the condition of society, which produces the general malaise. But arrived at this point the author finds himself in imminent danger of giving way to temptation number two, of becoming obsessed with the background of chimneys and malaise statistics; the living Sylvia is swallowed by her common denominators. The hole-in-the-curtain novel suffers from ignorance of facts; the pink decade novel from an obsession with facts; the true novel lives by the assimilation of facts.

And what goes for facts goes also for ideas—the battle-cries which enter through the open window. As the author is also a human being, it is inevitable and perhaps desirable that he should take sides. Yet whatever his convictions may be, any idea—political, philosophical, scientific—has novel-life and raison d'etre only if assimilated by the characters of the novel. In the true novel, as opposed to reportage and chronicle, the main action takes place inside the characters skull and ribs. Thus both facts and ideas are conveyed only after a double process of digestion.

It is a strange and sometimes very painful process, to choose and prepare the right ingredients for our nourriture terretre. When I think of the species Novelist, I cannot help being reminded of certain strange practices of the Australian white ant. The normal ants of this species are not able to benefit by the food within their reach owing to an insufficiency of their digestive apparatus. They would all die of starvation although perched on the most magnificent heap of food, but for the existence of certain specialized workers who gather the harvest, select, prepare, and digest the food, and feed all the others, the queen, the workers, and the winged adults, with the contents of their stomach. In some species these workers never leave the nest; they hang head downwards in the dark vaults and tunnels of the termitary, and in the absence of other receptacles, become living reservoirs, cisterns, honey-pots—with enormous elastic distended bellies into which the harvest is poured, to be pumped out when folk are hungry.

Hanging head downwards in the dark vaults of our termitary, feeding warriors and winged adults with the assimilated products of a bitter and poisonous harvest, the novelist of today is inclined towards rather sinister thoughts. Has not Aldous Huxley proclaimed in his last novel that humanity is a hopeless case, that good can only exist on the animal level below and on the nirvanic level above the human, and that should we succeed in extending a human individual's life to the age of about 200 years, this individual would then reach his true destination, and become a hairy ape, fornicating in squalor and beating his chest? I must confess to a great admiration for Huxley, yet it seems to me that in his meditations far from the maddening war, he has forgotten one rather simple fact about the human race: namely, that civilization dates back roughly 10,000 years, or only 300 generations, while Christianity's ethics were first taught only sixty-three generations ago. It might be of considerable advantage if we measured

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human history with the biological unit of generations instead of meaningless astronomical years. We often repeat, yet we do not fully realize that mankind is still in its early infancy.

This may be one of the reasons for the inherent didactic tendency of the novelist. At times the artist feels as if he were the only adult surrounded by beings still at the stage of befouling themselves. Hence his urge and duty in a world where nobody is well: *the duty not to accept.*

In fact all the temptations we have enumerated have one common denominator: the temptation to accept. To close the window pour "embrasser l'absolu," to seek consolation in eternity, means to accept the madness outside as incurable, to shirk responsibility. To leave the window ajar and hide the more unpleasant aspects outside means acceptance by complacency. It is the equivalent in social pathology of the phenomenon known in individual pathology as repression. There is indeed a mechanism of "social repression" which produces a thwarted social conscience with all the symptoms of a genuine neurosis.

Complacency means complicity by partial acceptance. In this sense all art is propaganda, by omission or commission. Yet only in this sense. Conscious propaganda means the artist's abdication and is only another form of escape—escape into happy fields of dilettantism where every problem and difficulty is easily solved.

The artist is no leader; his mission is not to solve but to expose, not to preach but to demonstrate. "We make out of our quarrels with others rhetorics, but with our quarrels with ourselves poetry," said Yeats. The healing, the teaching and preaching he must leave to others; but by exposing the truth by special means unavailable to them, he creates the emotional urge for healing. And his quiet but persistent question: What do you think of the earth, this planet where nobody is well? is often more effective than the querulous harangue of the preacher.

Thus the writer has a definite social task and function to fulfill. When embarking on a novel the author is not unlike the captain of a vessel setting out on a voyage with sealed orders in his pocket. But when he opens the envelope after having put out to sea, he finds that the order is written in invisible ink. Unable to read it, he is yet constantly aware of a duty to perform. For he is a captain of a warship, not of a pleasure-cruiser. The undecipherable yet imperative orders in his pocket fill him with the consciousness of his great responsibility. This is the greatness of the writer's mission; this is his predicament.

The Dinner Party

Mona Gardner

This story always excites me. I first heard it, with great relish, in India, where it is told as a true one. Later I learned that a magazine account had appeared shortly before the First World War. Th s account, or its author, I have never been able to track down. Perhaps you will remember it.

THE country is India. A large dinner party is being given in an up-country station by a colonial official and his wife. The guests are army officers and government attaches and their wives, and an American naturalist.

At one side of the long table a spirited discussion springs up between a young girl and a colonel. The girl insists women have long outgrown the jumping-on-a-chair-at-sight-of-a-mouse era, that they are not as fluttery as their grandmothers. The colonel says they are, explaining that women haven't the actual nerve control of men. The other men at the table agree with him.

"A woman's unfailing reaction in any crisis," the colonel says, "is to scream. And while a man may feel like it, yet he has that ounce more of control than a woman has. And that last ounce is what counts!"

The American scientist does not join in the argument, but sits watching the faces of the other guests. As

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he looks, he sees a strange expression come over the face of the hostess. She is staring straight ahead, the muscles of her face contracting slightly. With a small gesture she summons the native boy standing behind her chair. She whispers to him. The boy's eyes widen: he turns quickly and leaves the room. No one else sees this, nor the boy when he puts a bowl of milk on the verandah outside the glass doors.

The American comes to with a start. In India, milk in a bowl means only one thing. It is bait for a snake. He realizes there is a cobra in the room.

He looks up at the rafters—the likeliest place—and sees they are bare. Three corners of the room, which he can see by shifting only slightly, are empty. In the fourth corner a group of servants stand, waiting until the next course can be served. The American realizes there is only one place left—under the table.

His first impulse is to jump back and warn the others. But he knows the commotion will frighten the cobra and it will strike. He speaks quickly, the quality of his voice so arresting that it sobers everyone.

"I want to know just what control everyone at this table has. I will count three hundred—that's five minutes—and not one of you is to move a single muscle. The persons who move will forfeit 50 rupees. Now! Ready!"

The 20 people sit like stone images while he counts. He is saying " . . . two-hundred and eighty . . . " when, out of the corner of his eye, he sees the cobra emerge and make for the bowl of milk. Four or five screams ring out as he jumps to slam shut the verandah doors.

"You certainly were right, Colonel!" the host says. "A man has just shown us an example of real control."

"Just a minute," the American says, turning to his hostess, "there's one thing I'd like to know. Mrs. Wynnes, how did you know that cobra was in the room?"

A faint smile lights up the woman's face as she replies: "Because it was lying across my foot."

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Anatomy of Murder

DARK LEGEND. A Study in Murder. By Frederic Wertham. New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce. 1941. 270 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by BERTRAM D. LEWIN, M.D.

THIS is a book of three aspects: it is the story of a sensational crime, a series of psychiatric explanations and speculations, and a contribution to the psychological interpretation of Hamlet and Orestes. Gino, an Italian boy of seventeen, stabbed his mother to death. His father had been dead many years, his mother had lived with an assortment of men, but the crime was committed at a time when the mother no longer had a lover, and when there was no special external circumstance to provoke it. Dr. Wertham was the psychiatric expert on the case; he persuaded the Lunacy Commission that under the terms of the legal definition the boy was insane at the time of the crime, and he then set himself the problem of understanding the case.

A layman can little appreciate the reasons behind Dr. Wertham's exhaustive discussion of the formal "diagnosis" or classification of the case. A psychiatrist is beset by a long tradition that cases be given nosological names. Like so many Truepennies the State Commission and a host of professorial ghosts wait below stage to plague him till this ritual is accomplished. Dr. Wertham's circumstantial account of the tests and examinations shows that the case did not fall into any of the official rubrics of schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis, neurosis, and the rest. A classification as such, of course, yields no explanation of the crime. Nor was much illumination concerning matricide to be found in the general psychiatric literature. In fact, as the author indicates, for the understanding of this Orestean crime it is well to turn back to the study of Orestes. For in the death of the father, the adultery of the mother with one of the father's enemies, and in the nature of the crime there is an evident parallel between the story of Gino and that of Orestes. In fact, one element alone is lacking for complete analogy, which will be discussed later. The author falls back then on Freudian literature for explanatory ideas. Evidently these explanations can have only a speculative value, for Gino's unconscious was not adequately explored. But the speculations are, if purely intellectual, quite interesting. In brief Dr. Wertham chiefly interprets the crime as a lust-murder, a symbolically erotic act, rooted in the libidinal attachment of Gino to his mother, and suggests that this might be called an "Orestes complex." As a speculation this has a certain plausibility, but other more plausible theories are nearer at hand, particularly when we consider the detail not found in Gino's story, but which quite dominates the story of Orestes, namely, Elektra.

If Elektra were the simple feminine counterpart of Oedipus, the Elektra story should be different from the classic drama. Elektra obviously should kill her mother and marry her father. But the father is killed first, and then the brother kills the mother. Why does Orestes enter to carry out Elektra's intention? Why does Orestes become the leading figure after Elektra has held the center of the stage? I think the answer would be the following: Elektra is the feminine father-loving unconscious of a man; Orestes and Elektra are the same person, and Orestes's crime which looks like a lust-murder distracts the attention from its essentially feminine nature. The authors who have used the Elektra-Orestes legend have, after all, all been men who needed some concealment of the inverted nature of the event. Orestes may think of Elektra as a second mother, as Dr. Wertham states, but she is a sister-mother then (a familiar situation in clinical psychoanalysis), a mother with whom as with a sister, there is much identification and rivalry, especially in the passive relation to the father. According to this train of thought, which arises from psychoanalytic experience, Orestes's deed is an Oedipal one but not of the positive male kind; it is an inverted feminine Oedipus complex that is manifest here.

Hence, though there is no Elektra evident in Gino's life Gino's deed is quite plausibly the deed of his feminine side—a theory which admittedly could only be substantiated by an analytic investigation.

There is much that is excellent in the composition of the book. The style is fluent, the comments erudite, and the critical comments are conveniently segregated.

Answers to "Quiz for Americans"
(See page 13)

a. Homer
b. Thales
c. Plato
d. John Milton
e. Daniel Webster
f. Leonardo da Vinci
g. William Shakespeare
h. William Shakespeare
i. Baltasar Gracián
j. Plato
k. John Milton
l. Abraham Cowley
m. John Taylor
n. Stuart Chase
o. Voltaire
p. James Thomson
q. Benjamin Franklin
r. Thomas Jefferson
s. Jean Jacques Rousseau
t. Samuel Adams
u. Charles Churchill
v. Erasmus Darwin
w. Thomas Jefferson
x. John Dickinson
y. Patrick Henry
z. Thomas Jefferson

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As It Seemed Then

THE GREAT PACIFIC WAR. By Hector C. Bywater. New York: Houghton Mifflin. 1925. 321 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by MAJOR T. B. CATRON

APPLYING sound logic to well-established conclusions, Mr. Bywater has in this book proceeded from the known facts of recent history and contemporary conditions to reason out in fiction form possible developments of the future. He has used as a starting point for his story the history of the relations of recent years between the United States and Japan, the international agreements entered into by them, and the political and economic conditions in and affecting each of these countries that might bring their interests into serious opposition. He has then taken into account contemporary world movements and their effect. From this basis, and with great plausibility, Mr. Bywater constructs a hypothetical war between the United States and Japan, of which his book purports to be a popular history written in a most graphic newspaper style. Mr. Bywater's ideas and conclusions on the particular economic and strategic aspects of the situation that he conjures up are interesting, whether or not one may agree with them. His description of the land and naval engagements are most vivid and show an excellent grasp of tactics, though professional readers may take exception to some details. His views concerning the future use of aircraft seem very sound and are convincingly put.

In his story, Japan is defeated in the end, and, according to a hypothetical Japanese historian, principally because the government accepted the advice of the army authorities, rather than that of the naval authorities. In view of the present discussions concerning the establishment of an independent air force, it may be pertinent to point out that the disagreements and lack of coördination that are portrayed as resulting from having two major services could only be increased if there were three.

Though written about war, "The Great Pacific War" is far from being an argument for war, but is rather one against it, the final paragraphs of the book emphasizing the futility of an American-Japanese War. It is well worth while for the information it contains and the views that it presents. To the lay reader it should be a gripping piece of fiction; to military and naval readers, professional or by avocation, it should be of absorbing interest, since it has a personal application. We can fit ourselves into what seems to be a technically very reasonable and true picture, and we can also imagine the feelings of the home-folks if they should read the press accounts of a war such as the one portrayed, in which we were members of the expedition.

This review is reprinted from the Dec. 5*th*, 1925 *issue of* The Saturday Review. *The publishers have re-issued this book, originally published* 17 *years ago, in a new printing because of its extraordinary timeliness; and our original review is likewise republished not only in the thought that readers may like to learn what our reviewer thought of it at the time, but because it, too, is of intrinsic interest.*

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 409)

LEONARD BACON:
SEMI-CENTENNIAL

(CHAPTER XIX: DEFENSE OF POETRY)

As has been said . . . poetry needs no defense. If the beauty of language and the interconnection between such heights and deeps as there are in man, cease to be honored and recognized, why not return to the gorilla and be done with it!

A Great Chemist

TORCH AND CRUCIBLE. By Sidney J. French. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1941. 285 *pp., with index.* $3.50.

Reviewed by JOHN E. PFEIFFER

BEFORE chemists could learn enough about nature to create stocking of synthetic fibers, perfumes from sticky coal tar, and plastics as metal substitutes in the national-defense effort, some logical scientist had to clear away an outmoded framework of traditional thought inherited from the Greek philosophers about substances. The scientist who did most to accomplish this all-important breakaway was Antoine Lavoisier and a carefully written biography of the great 18th-century Frenchman has just been published by Dr. Sidney J. French, professor of chemistry at Colgate University, who clearly describes the most important work of the "father of modern chemistry."

The Greeks had assumed that four elements—earth, air, water, and fire—were the building blocks of all material things. Chemists swore by a theory that represented a modified version of

Four centuries of forgotten glory ... *unearthed at last!*

THE excavations at the tomb of King Tutankhamun in 1922 have only been a part of the amazing information brought to light in recent years of the years 1546-1085 B.C.—"when Egypt ruled the East!" Here, complete for the first time in English, is presented the fascinating story that can now be told of this miraculous Golden Age: its conquests, its dynasties, its small but important details of life and living—and its unbelievably beautiful art, sculpture, poetry, architecture—one of the highest peaks of human culture! Of the authors, Mr. Steindorff is regarded as the greatest living Egyptologist; Mr. Seele is Professor of Egyptology at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. 300 pages, 109 halftones, charts, drawings. $4.00

WHEN EGYPT RULED THE EAST

By George Steindorff and Keith C. Seele

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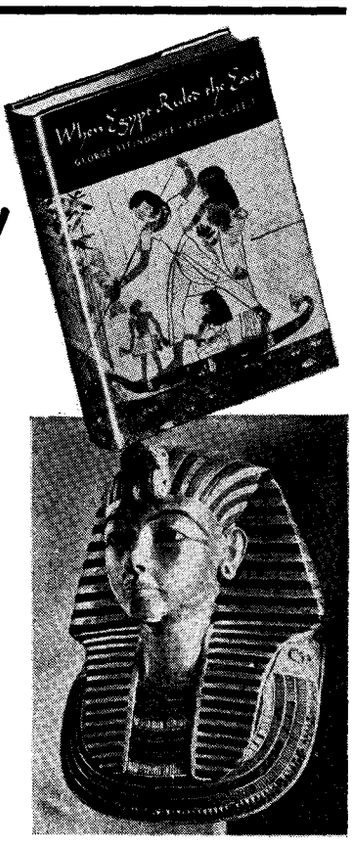

Above: Gold Mask of Tutankhamun
Below: Part of a religious frieze

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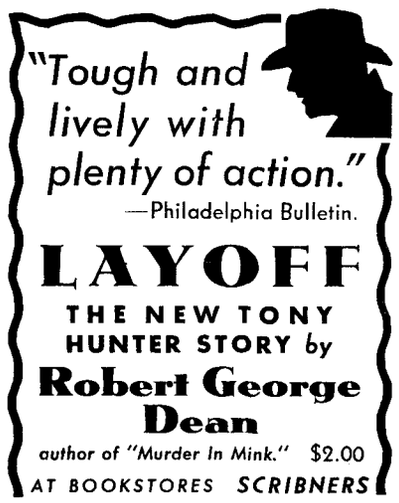
the ancient ideas; namely, that all things that burned contained an essence of fire called "phlogiston," which flowed out of inflammable substances as they burned. But Lavoisier, using extremely delicate balances, observed that the ashes of burned-out metals weighed more than the original metal and deduced that if the process were the result of a loss of phlogiston, the mysterious substance must have negative weight, which made little sense. Dr. French shows how, by combining such tests with the findings of Priestley, the English chemist, and other contemporaries, Lavoisier was able in 1778 to overthrow the phlogiston theory, demonstrate the role of oxygen in burning, and break the mental bonds that had slowed chemical progress.

The book also reveals that Lavoisier was a tireless worker on more immediate applications of science. He was consulted to help solve problems connected with the trajectories of bullets, the construction of invalid chairs, and the detection of counterfeit money. He improved his country's gunpowder so that French guns were outshooting the best British weapons. The author is thoroughly at home in presenting Lavoisier the scientist, but although he devotes a large part of the biography to the chemist's personal and political affairs (including interesting and new information about the great Frenchman's friendship with the duPonts who, mainly as a result of training under Lavoisier, were destined to build a vast chemical industry in the United States), Lavoisier the man does not emerge clearly.

Fewer Titles

A report recently issued by *The London Bookseller* discloses that since 1939 the number of titles brought out in England has been just about cut in half. In 1939 there were 14,904 and last year only 7,581. Since no figures were received no conclusions may be drawn about comparative sales but it is said that the demand for reading in England is greater than ever.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AT BOOKSTORES SCRIBNERS

About Manners

VICTORIAN PRELUDE: A History of English Manners, 1700-1830. By Maurice J. Quinlan. New York: Columbia University Press. 1941. 301 *pp., with index.* $3.

Reviewed by CRANE BRINTON

IN 1806 the Rev. James Plumptre published a collection of songs, duly expurgated to accord with morals and religion, the profits of which were to go to the Society for the Suppresion of Vice. Unlike his better known contemporary Thomas Bowdler, Plumptre was not content to delete what offended him; he made instead additions and emendations of his own. In his version Shakespeare's cuckoo song from *Love's Labour's Lost* with its mocking end,

> Cuckoo, cuckoo: O, word of fear,
> Unpleasing to a married ear!

became

> The cuckoo then on every tree,
> Begins his song, for thus sings he:
> Cuckoo-cuckow—he then doth sing,
> Announcing the return of spring.

And an even better-known song became in Plumptre's collection

> Under the greenwood tree
> Who loves to work with me.

From the earnest reformers who tried to clean up the London of Gin Lane and Tyburn hangings in the early eighteenth century to the triumphant moralists who could crown their labors with such success as Plumptre's, Mr. Quinlan's book traces, chiefly from literary sources, some of the manifestations of that code of behavior we call Victorian. Mr. Quinlan invents nothing. The model female, the S.P.C.K., the Spiritual Barometer, Hannah More, and the hundred other details he has brought together are all wholly real. Unlike the bright young men of only a few years ago, he does not make fun of his pre-Victorians, does not even load the evidence against them by picking out the most savorily absurd things about their behavior. In no sense an attempt to find out *why* manners change, nor even how far changes in certain kinds of actual conduct follow from changes in what men say and write, Mr. Quinlan's book sticks admirably to its more modest purpose of bringing from often obscure sources examples of what writers and preachers said about manners. If we ever get back to the pleasant sport of gunning for the Victorians, this will save many tough hours in a library for the literary sportsman.

The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
MURDER IS OUT *Lee Thayer* (Dodd, Mead: $2.)	Peter Clancy gets whispered summons to New York mansion, finds murdered man, and encounters an extraordinary family.	Carefully wrought story of blackmail and family skeletons, with good characterizations and able sleuthing—but rather slowly paced and overtalky.	Fair
WHO KILLED CALDWELL? *Carolyn Wells* (Lippincott: $2.)	Aconite and drowning account for two members of Manhattan family. Fleming Stone unmasks the murderer.	Typical Wells yarn, with logical detecting and lively dialogue—although practised eyes may guess guilty persons' identity rather early.	For Stone fans
ADVANCE AGENT *John August* (Little, Brown & Co.: $2.)	Fugitive from Canadian prison camp reaches New England Nazi and isolationist nest and leads to exposure of far-flung plot.	Up-to-minute tale of subversive activities, moving at break-neck speed through one melodramatic situation after another—plus palpitating romance.	Exciting
LAST LAUGH, MR. MOTO *John P. Marquand* (Little, Brown: $2.)	Mysterious couple hire down-at-heel American to take them to Caribbean island where Mr. Moto appears and things happen.	Three-cornered search for invaluable air-plane secret leads to gunplay, rehabilitation of dissolute American and possible discomfiture of Jap agent.	Timely thriller
MAGPIE MURDER *J. Russell Warren* (Sheridan House)	Strangling of inebriated wastrel at English inn after wild party gives Insp. Aloysius M'Guire "curly case."	Painstakingly worked out puzzle—very deliberate—told by sleuth and quick-witted friend of decedent.	Average

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Drama Anthology

POETIC DRAMA. AN ANTHOLOGY. From the Ancient Greek to the Modern American. Edited with an Introduction by Alfred Kreymborg. New York: Modern Age Books. 1941. 855 *pp.* $5.

Reviewed by JANE DRANSFIELD

THE thirty-three plays in this new Alfred Kreymborg anthology—the first collection of verse plays in the 2400 years of drama—are not all equally great, but all are verse of high order, actable on a stage, and, in general, humanitarian in theme, thereby fulfilling the book's stated aim that it be "a continuous plea for an indivisible people's and artists' theatre."

The selection is fresh, enlarging our periphery, many plays here being otherwise difficult of access. The "Agamemnon" of Aeschylus is in the recent and flowing translation of Edith Hamilton; Euripides's "Ion" in the exultant short lines of H.D. From China is the ancient comedy masterpiece "The Chalk Circle," from the Middle Ages stands out "The Second Shepherd's Play," with its inimitable mixture of folk humor and early Christian mysticism. From Shakespeare is "Measure for Measure," from Webster the lesser known "The White Devil," wherein Vittoria Corombo's colorful wit renders pale the Duchess of Malfi. From Spain is the "first proletarian drama," Lope de Vega's "The Sheep Well." Here is "Volpone," "The Misanthrope," Goethe's "Tasso," Shelley's "The Cenci." And here, too, is rescued from undeserved oblivion William Vaughn Moody's magnificent "The Death of Eve," perhaps the nearest approach to a classic that American drama has produced.

Length excluded certain desired plays, as Ibsen's "Peer Gynt," and Robinson Jeffers' "Tower Beyond Tragedy." Most regretably, T. S. Eliot refused inclusion for his "Murder in the Cathedral," the one truly great modern poetic play, and Sherwood Anderson likewise refused "Mary of Scotland." Unquestionably the modern plays suffers from juxtaposition, as here, to the classics. By popular and commercial vote, the playwright who is true poet is compelled to address a special and usually small audience. There is not, or rather, there has not been in the immediate past, a clarion call for him to speak in a large, universal voice. Today's plays, therefore, are necessarily drawn from the experimental, or "little" theatre, and from the radio. With the exception of Auden and Isherwood's "The Dog Beneath the Skin," all are in the one act form. Yeats is represented by his beautiful plea for the poet's restoration to an honored position in society, "The King's Threshold"; Gordon Bottomley by "Gruach" (for which we do not quite share the editor's enthusiasm); Millay by her best play "Aria da Capo, Kreymborg by "Hole in the Wall," a fable-satire on economic conditions, and MacLeish by "The Fall of the City," the radio play at its height. "Shenandoah" by the young Delmore Swartz deserves special mention because of the original design in which realism is united to poetry of great sensitivity, even power.

The foreword explains aim and omissions. Succinctly and with illumination the Introduction outlines the history of poetic drama from the Greeks to our own time. Each play is prefaced with an interpretive note on the period and author, with lists of his other plays and suggestions for further reading. Nineteenth and twentieth century dramatists, foreign and American, are listed at the close, with an excellent bibliography covering each aspect of the theatre. Every library, public and private, would be enriched by this book. Already of wide reputation for his poems and plays, and seven previous distinctive anthologies, Mr. Kreymborg again puts us in his debt.

Erratum

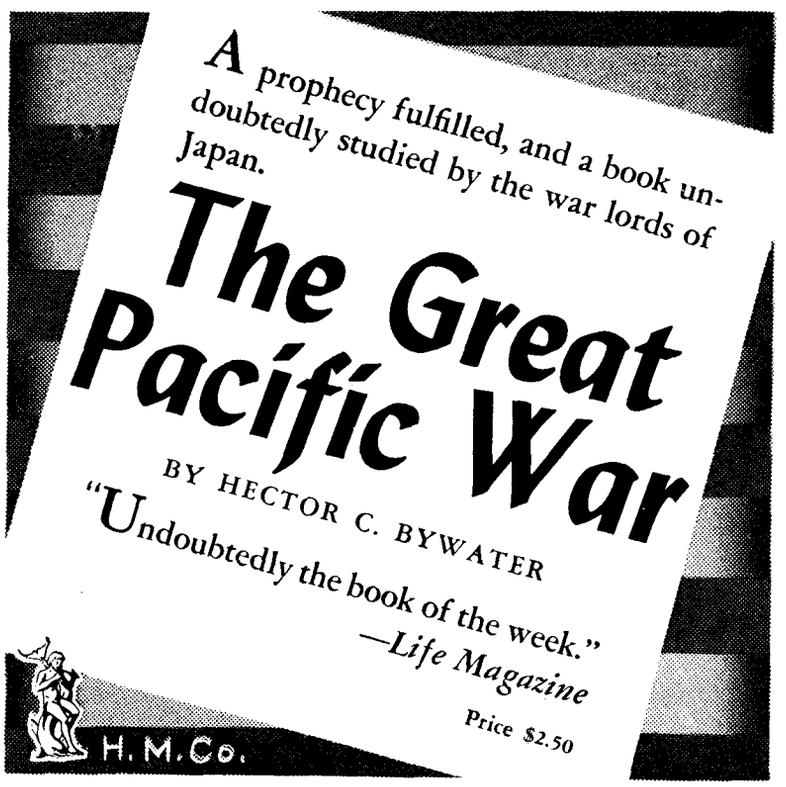
In the issue of January 5 the statement was erroneously made that John Weaver won the thousand dollar prize offered by *The Atlantic Monthly* for short stories written by authors in their twenties. As a matter of fact the prize was divided between Mr. Weaver and Jeanne Wylie.

Health Care

BEAUTY AND HEALTH. By J. Howard Crum. New York: Smith & Durrell. 1941. 336 *pp.* $2.

AMERICAN women bought $450,000,000 worth of cosmetics last year and as many of the materials used in the preparations of these cosmetics are needed in defense, prices are said to be destined for a skyward jump. Under such circumstances Dr. Crum's book which outlines a "course in loveliness" with only minor use of any such things as beauty preparations, appears with great timeliness. The author feels sure that the proper mode of life, diet, and exercise are more to be desired than creams, lotions, and folderols.

The stretchings and bendings, wreathings and writhings suggested by the author, should not be called exercises since their originator prefers his term "crumacises." They are based on long established theories but have certain new variations to help out particular conditions and they seem very pleasant to take. Reducing diets are given which have regard not only to the desires of the dieters but also to their capabilities in the matter of abstinence and which should appeal strongly to the less iron-willed members of overweight. Care of skin, hair, and so on is also taken up in careful detail. Many readers may not agree with Dr. Crum's calmly acquiescent attitude towards face lifting and other plastic surgery but few will fail to find helpful suggestions in his book.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The New Books

Fiction

NOW, VOYAGER. By Olive Higgins Prouty. Houghton Mifflin. 1941. 340 *pp.* $2.50.

For all its sober restraint and air of seriousness, this novel is sheer romance of the kind that flowers in the pages of the women's magazines. It is the story of a suppressed and unattractive girl from Boston, who, released from a mother's domination by the accident of a nervous breakdown, attains independence, sheds her inhibitions, and even acquires that ultimate of wish-fulfillments—glamor. Charlotte's career is a little suggestive of those magazine advertisements that guarantee charm in a tube of this or that, and the psychological possibilities of the story are submerged by superficialities. It is enough for a woman's salvation, we are told in effect, to cut off her hair, to learn to smoke, to drink a cocktail, to play bridge—in a word, to conform to a pattern. And, of course, to take a cruise—for it is on a boat that Charlotte, transformed by clothes and coiffure, finds a new personality to match her *chic* exterior, and also, a romance. Her love-affair, while it involves suffering and requires further psychological adjustment on her part, has not the keen and acrid painfulness of life, but is, rather, like a day dream that compensates for emptiness. A schoolgirl day dream.

The fundamental fact is that neither Charlotte nor J. D., with whom she falls in love, are interesting or particularly attractive people, and wary of their mediocrity, the reader shrinks from identifying himself with them. Other peoples' private conversations, sentimentalities and frustrations, divested of the inner tremor of our own experience, inevitably appear banal to us.

C. C.

AH Q AND OTHERS, SELECTED STORIES OF LUSIN. Translated by Chi-Chen Wang. Columbia University Press. 1941. 219 *pp.* $2.50.

This excellent and accurate translation of eleven modern Chinese short stories should be placed in every American university and public library. It will be particularly welcomed by students of present-day world literature, for only one general collection of modern Chinese stories is available ("Living China," edited by Edgar Snow) though there are two other inferior translations of "Ah Q" by Kyn Yn Yu and George Kin Leung. Chi-Chen Wang, professor of Chinese Literature at Columbia University, who also translated the old novel, "Dream of the Red Chamber," has rendered Lusin's economical and ironical style in plain direct English with no straining for quaintness and effect.

Lusin (also spelled Lu Hsün) is China's greatest modern literary figure and led the literary movement until his death in 1936. He is the bedrock of present-day Chinese intellectual life and in reading his stories one gets an authentic insight not only into the subject material but into a real native Chinese mind in intimate communication with its fellows. Like Cervantes's, Lusin's historic role in his own country was to destroy outworn feudal concepts by ridicule. His most famous story, "Ah Q," is a bitter satire on the old Chinese philosophy of rationalizing defeat, and the term "Ah Q-ism" has become as meaningful in China as the word "quixotic" among readers of "Don Quixote."

N. W.

BETWEEN TWO AUTUMNS. By Percy Marks. Reynal & Hitchcock. 1941. 350 *pp.* $2.50.

Mr. Marks has written a novel that is readable and interesting even while it falls short of what he intended. He sets forth to give a reverse twist to the passing-of-the-third-floor-back idea. That is, he centers his plot upon a character who alters the lives of all upon whom he impinges, but this time the effect is bad, a blight instead of a blessing. Out of a storm comes this strange character, into the lives of a peaceful suburban family. They take him in, give him a job, and make him a part of the family. We watch, then, how everything goes awry, relationships are broken, tensions mount, not because of any conscious evil purpose but rather because this character ("Tink," he is called) has a fatality about him that he cannot help. He is aware of it, he warns them of it, but they do not believe. And the trouble with the story, where it does fall short, is that we do not believe either. This kind of tale, vaguely supernatural, needs to carry profound conviction, needs to create that suspension of disbelief which makes all things possible. "Tink" is too prosaic, too plainly drawn, to carry the weight. He is brisk and cheerful and bubbly and this-worldly, more like a handy Babbitt than a haunting influence. He casts a round, comfortable shadow, instead of an aura. No need to labor the point beyond that. The story makes good reading for what it tries to do, and also because Mr. Marks has a good and lively style.

N. L. R.

History

GHOST TOWN. By G. Ezra Dane, in collaboration with Beatrice J. Dane. Knopf. 1941. 311 *pp.* $3.50.

Mr. Dane and his mother, in this book, set out to pan gold from the

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literary diggins once worked by Mark Twain, famous for the rich nuggets he extracted during the Gold Rush days. Carefully reworking this material, the Danes clean up plenty of literary pay-dirt, but of course, Twain got there first and found the richest ore; but their yarns do indirectly show the reader where lay the raw materials of the oral narratives that Twain's genius transmitted to the printed page. They are digging in the same subsoil of American humor from which Twain's Western stories were washed clean, and in staking out the town of Columbia in California's Mother Lode they find plenty of gold left in the silt deposited by time.

What the Danes did was to settle in Columbia, get to know the past and the present of the old town, and then, from some twenty-five story-tellers of the present day (including Mr. Dane's father and aunt) collect yarns, which are put into the mouth of a created Old-Timer, "who sits on the stump at the crossroads and speaks with the voice of the ghost town itself." As the Danes have a good ear for speech rhythms and the flavor of language, and a sympathetic feeling for the past both of truth and of folk-lore, they give one a fine understanding of the old town and the great American folk art of story-telling.

I. D. H.

Travel

PLANT HUNTERS IN THE ANDES. By T. Harper Goodspeed. Farrar & Rinehart. 1941. 421 *pp., index.* $5.

Dr. Goodspeed has been professor of botany at the University of California for the past thirty years. During that time he has made the genus *Nicotiana,* to which our tobacco-plant belongs, his principal study. In this pursuit, he has built up, at the University of California Botanical Garden, "the world's largest living collection of *Nicotiana* species," and has personally culled specimens from all around the earth. To collect and to study the distribution of certain wild *Nicotianas* in the Andes and adjacent regions, he led the two expeditions to South America of which this volume is an account. The first, in 1935-36, was brief and had only four members. The second, in 1938-39, was more important: it was engaged in by several small parties of scientists, each of which had the mission of covering a certain territory, so that altogether this expedition ranged from Peru through Bolivia and Chile to the Argentine. It was not, therefore, a unified expedition, and since Dr. Goodspeed could not be with all its members on all their forays, he depended in large part on their own accounts in reporting it.

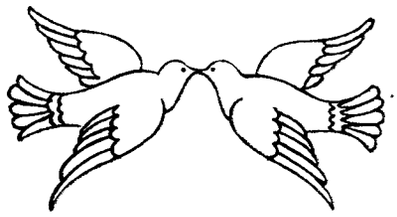
The literary problem of organizing and presenting such a quantity of diverse material, much of it secondhand, for hard-pressed readers who depend increasingly on quick résumés and flashes of information, has not been satisfactorily met in this volume. The present narrative, running to over four hundred pages, is overburdened with background material, explanation, and circumstantial detail. It will reward the reader who still has leisure of mind with much interesting information and a mild, pleasant account of the adventures that befall travelers in primitive lands. But for most readers such a book as this, having no particular distinction and written with no marked intellectual impulsion, comes half a century too late.

L. J. H., Jr.

WINTER IN VERMONT. By Charles Edward Crane. Knopf. 1941. 304 *pp.* $3.50.

Whatever you want to know about the Green Mountains after the snow flies you are pretty sure to find it in this book by the author of "Let Me Show You Vermont." Just the weather itself stimulates Mr. Crane to high, and communicated, excitement. You will find descriptions of all sorts of snow storms given with scientific accuracy and personal enthusiasm. But Mr. Crane is not for laziness. He is all for you being up and at it a-skiing. Every phase of that sport is investigated and recorded for the edification of real votives. This section of the book makes an excellent guide as to where the slopes are, how difficult, whether or not they have tows, and so on. The photographs here, and indeed through the volume, are lovely and on the margin of fairyland. Other chapters are given over to biographies of Vermonters, the one on William Bentley, or to intimate stories of the Vermont villages, bits of personal narrative with a recipe or two thrown in for good measure. Mr. Crane is obviously in love with his state and he wants you to be too. Perhaps his purpose would have been more nearly accomplished if he had blue pencilled a little more drastically in going over what his first enthusiasm led him to include, for there is a good deal of sentimental verse and quotation that clutters up the book and the general effect is of too much crammed between the covers.

G. G. B.



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**The PERSONAL* advertisements in the London papers [and the SRL, too.]*

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The Crostics Club

Occasionally, perhaps regularly, if enough members of the Crostics Club would like it, Mrs. Kingsley will conduct a column in this space devoted to correspondence and other matters pertaining to the Double Crostics. Letters to Mrs. Kingsley may be sent care of The Saturday Review, 25 *West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.*

A REMARK by one of the *SRL* editors gives me the subject for this week's comment. One of his friends, he says, fears that the use of reference books with Double-Crostics is "cheating." Of course it isn't! Double-Crostics as I intended them and as I evolve them require reference books. For myself, the right reference books are: Webster's "New International 1940"; "Oxford Companion to English Literature"; "Oxford Companion to American Literature" (out recently); Gayley's "Classic Myths," a concordance of the Bible, and a set of Shakespeare.

THIS morning a postcard came from J. T. Hatfield, Evanston, Illinois, whose clever spontaneous rhymes, especially to point out errors, are a source of endless surprise. This time he writes:

In re: No. 407: N

From Homer I had learned to know
That "sandy" stream, Scamander;
While famous for its winding flow
Was (as I thought) meander.
This slight divarication
Upset my calculation

And I reply:

Webster, pg. 2229

Scamander v. (L. *Scamander;* river in Asia Minor, fr.Gr. Skamandos. See Menderez (in *Gaz.*) of MEANDER). To wander in a winding course.

Webster, pg. 1520

Meander n. (L. *maeander,* fr.Gr. maiandros, fr. MAINDROS), a river in Prygia, proverbial for its windings (now the Menderez). 1. A turn or winding, as a stream, etc. Meander v. &c.

Webster, Gazeteer, pg. 3091:

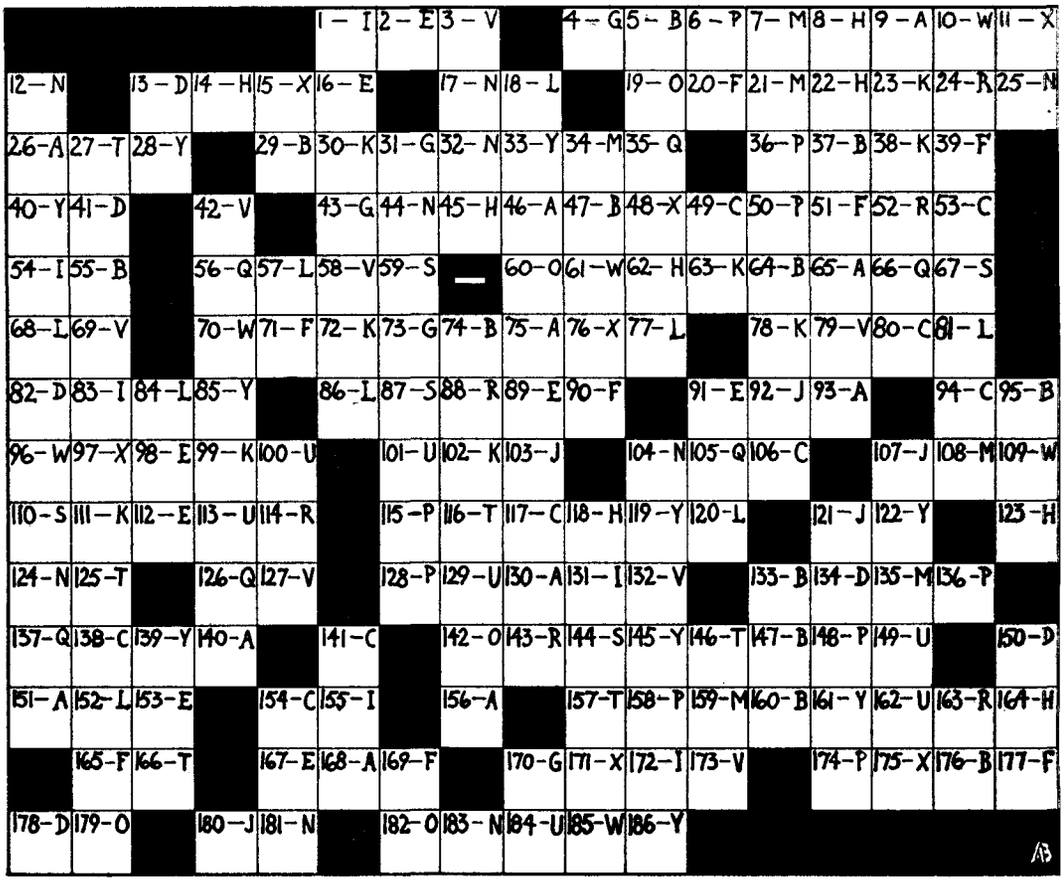
Menderes (take note, Mr. J. R. Bethel of G. & C. Merriam Co. the s, not the z). Anc. MEANDER, riv. 240 m. As in Minor, to Agean Sea, Opp. Samos—anc. SCAMANDER, riv. Asia Minor, 60 m. mt. Ida to Dardanelles.

So there, now!

Sometime ago a California puzzler took me to task for saying in one of the Double-Crostics that *Themis* was the mother *of Prometheus.* He declared that *Clymene* was. On consulting Webster I found that he was right and I was right; whereupon I wrote to them for an explanation of such double-dealing! They referred me to the word *Prometheus, son of Iapelus and Clymene, or according to Aeschylus, a son of Themis, or Gaea.* Webster's wrote that in the next edition they would insert that fact—according to Aeschylus—after *Themis.*

To be continued in our next.

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 410

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 17 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Fabulous lean medieval monster who fed on patient wives.
B. Novel by Edith Wharton (1905) (with *The*).
C. Celebrating victory, as applied to an ode.
D. Flat, wide river valley often used with name of river.
E. The black-varnish tree or the varnish.
F. Introductory part of a discourse.
G. Appraised; assessed for value.
H. Monk of a reformed Cistercian order (U. S. 1848).
I. Eccentric.
J. One of the Vanir (Norse myth.)
K. Mere apprehension of an object.
L. Fruitless and endless (Gr. myth.)
M. Beguile; to ensnare.
N. Epithet applied to Andrea del Sarto as a painter (see Browning's poem).
O. Alleviates.
P. Applied to the tract of unsettled Territory not in 13 Colonies in 1776.
Q. What Peter Schlemihl surrendered to the devil.
R. Spirit that actuates moral attitudes in a people.
S. Carrion; garbage.
T. To get to the bottom of.
U. Indian of whose people Tecumseh was Chief.
V. Applied to the Hydra Hercules killed (2nd Labor).
W. A *Way* most famous of Roman roads.
X. Oblivion to external reality; final emancipation (Hinduism).
Y. Fiber of a tropical sedge used in making paper and cord.

WORDS

75 168 26 46 140 93 65 156 9 151 130
95 64 160 29 37 147 55 5 74 47 176 133
106 49 154 117 138 94 80 141 53
41 150 178 134 82 13
167 2 16 89 91 153 98 112
169 20 165 90 39 51 177 71
73 4 170 31 43
118 22 14 62 123 8 45 164
54 172 1 131 155 83
28 107 180 103 121 92
38 30 102 63 72 111 23 78 99
120 68 77 86 152 81 57 84 18
34 159 135 7 108 21
181 17 124 32 104 183 44 12 25
19 60 142 179 182
174 158 148 128 36 115 6 136 50
56 105 66 35 126 137
114 88 143 163 52 24
144 59 87 110 67
166 116 125 146 27 157
113 129 184 101 149 162 100
58 3 132 127 42 173 79 69
70 61 109 96 10 185
11 48 171 15 175 97 76
186 40 161 145 33 122 139 85 119

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THE reading habits of our Nation are changing. We are becoming a defense-minded and defense-reading people. From no less an authority than Dr. Charles G. Williamson, Director of Libraries at Columbia University comes word that there has been a decided decline in the normal use of books by students and growing demand for information on defense matters. These are facts that have been quickly recognized by American publishers. Within the past eighteen months hundreds of books have been coming from the presses and because of them we are today an ably informed people on international affairs, modern warfare, and the technique of propaganda.

We believe the radio commentator is no better informed than the intelligent book-reading American. His sources of information come from avenues similar to yours and mine. Few Americans believed the broad expanses of the Pacific and the Atlantic insured safety and comfort. The attack on Pearl Harbor, though startling, was not quite unexpected. Our authors like Wilfred Fleisher, Upton Close, John Gunther, Russell Owen, Hanson Baldwin, and others versed in Asiatic and Pacific history have made us well aware of the dangers that confront us. We are united because we are told the truth and for that we must give credit to the integrity of our book publishers and our newspapers.

So books on romance and love and "escapist" material will move to the background. We are reading books on how to spot enemy aircraft, how to render first-aid, how to identify the various types of bombs, and above all, how to remain calm and cool under fire. The fastest of all-time best-sellers right now is "The Red Cross First Aid Book."

★ ★

☞In lieu of the Irish Sweepstakes and the Winter closing of all race tracks in New York, some of the Viking gentlemen have devised other means to stimulate action in the hazardous game of chance. They have formed a syndicate and are booking bets on the number of copies the new Steinbeck book, "The Moon Is Down" will sell. They are taking all bets that say the book will not exceed a half-million copies. The angle on this betting proposition is a simple one: The Book-of-the-Month Club selection practically guarantees 250,000 and if the book follows the example of Steinbeck's earlier achievements, the trade will easily take care of another quarter-million. So while the Viking boys want action we are afraid they are booking "cinch" bets. Tell you what—we'll bet an autographed copy of "The G-String Murder Case" against a signed "The Moon Is Down" the book will be damned by about two reviewers on the West Coast, praised by 241 reviewers elsewhere, and purchased by Darryl Zanuck for the movies, all within a month of publication.

★ ★

☞Dodd, Mead and Company have announced the winner of the seventh Dodd, Mead Detective Story Contest. For the first time the award is being made to an English writer, Christianna Brand, for a novel entitled "Heads You Lose," which is due for publication March 10. A new prize award of a thousand dollars is now being offered, the eighth in the Red Badge series; the closing date for receipt of manuscripts is April 1, 1942.

★ ★

☞Friends of Brown & Delhi, lower Fifth Avenue booksellers will be glad to know they have opened another store, close to their main one, at 70 Fifth Avenue. The new addition is primarily stocked with prints, greeting cards, phonograph records, and childrens' books, thus affording greater selling space for these items than the old bookstore permitted. Both of the stores are open evenings for the late shoppers who stroll down this famous Village street.

★ ★

☞William Woods, who recently completed a first novel and sold it to Lippincott, who in turn sold the movie rights to Warner Brothers, is going to buy a little farm on which he plans to raise goats, with part of the money he is to receive for the screen rights, and with the rest "Keep 'Em Flying" by buying defense bonds.

★ ★

☞The Trustees of the Cummington School announce a competitive scholarship for summer study in writing, the conferences being under the leadership of some of the most eminent writers of our day. These scholarships give advanced training on the levels of professional, graduate, and undergraduate study. Candidates must have completed secondary school and have done considerable work in their field. They are open both to men and women.

All applications must be filed complete before March 15, 1942. Candidates should send for application blanks and instructions (but not send examples of work until notified to do so) to the Registrar, Cummington School, Cummington, Massachusetts.

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